NEW SERIAL JUST COMMENCED, PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 372. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 15TH, 1896. [ONE PENNY.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Public are invited to LUKE through the following, and ascertain if their respective appellations appear; but whether such happen to be "on the carpet" or not, all readers who are wise will no doubt carefully MARK the advice offered:

BEECHAM'S PILLS can ADA man to be JOE-vial, HUGH-merous, and blithe as a TOM-tit.

BEECHAM'S PILLS are LILLY-putian in size, but they bring great BEN-efits.

BEECHAM'S PILLS if PERCY-vered with, wholly AMELIA-rate BILLY-ousness.

BEECHAM'S PILLS bring a healthy ROSE-y complexion, and make you as lively as LUCY-fer.

BEECHAM'S PILLS invariably act like MADGE-ic, and are as searching as salt-PETER.

BEECHAM'S PILLS are known through CHRIS-tendom, and MILES beyond, as the most EFFIE-cacious.

BEECHAM'S PILLS are as well known as the field DAISY, the VIOLET, or the POLLY-anthus.

BEECHAM'S PILLS are as celebrated as England's Union JACK, round the globe JENNY-rally.

BEECHAM'S PILLS make you as hard as ADAM-antine, and help you to a GRACE-ful MILLIE-tary carriage.

BEECHAM'S PILLS are ever MINNIE-sters of relief; you may safely SAM-ple them any time Carte-BLANCHE.

To ANNIE-mate you, and make your breath fragrant as sweet JESSIE-mine, try **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

When you feel TIM-id, OWEN to nervousness, you should PAT-ronise at once **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

If Nightmare is ROBIN you of proper repose and pulling you down a PEG, try **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

When you feel RUTH-ful, and un-AMY-able, through EVA-gation from health, take **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

To assist you in your JIM-nastic and recreative exercises there's nothing more ABEL than **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

If you wish to use PRUDENCE you will with all CONSTANCE-y stick to your **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

To help to MOLLY-fy the JOSS-tle of life, and its FLO of excitement, take occasionally **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

If you are SALLY-ing off to the seaside, or to rusti-KATE, always CARRIE with you **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

After the excitement of DAN-cing and being BELLE of the ball, GLADYS she who can find her **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

We don't wish to DICK-tate, or PHIL you with FAN-cy ideas, but we ask you in all HONOR to try **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

Rumour both at home and abroad SETH your GUY-ding star in health shall ever be **BEECHAM'S PILLS.**

To be quite FRANK and ERNEST in the MAT-ter, we MAY say the Pills of VICTOR-y are

BEECHAM'S PILLS.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

THE JOHN NOBLE

HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES

Direct from the Largest Firm of Costume Manufacturers in the world, have secured beyond a doubt the **ADMIRATION OF THE WORLD.** Being Absolutely Without an Equal Anywhere for Stylish Appearance, Durability, and Actual Money Value. **10/6**

TWO GOLD MEDALS AWARDED.

These Costumes have received the highest praise from the leading journals of the day, and are justly regarded by all purchasers as **Even Better than Advertised.**

Each Costume scientifically cut, tailor-made, and beautifully finished in an exceedingly smart mode, as illustration. The design consists of full wide Godet skirt with belt, also very neat bodice with full front and broad box-pleat down centre, trimmed bold silk cord and three large buttons. Collar and cuffs outlined silk cord; saddle and sleeves lined.

Price complete only **10/6,** safely packed and sent carriage paid for 9d. extra.

Sizes in stock fit any figure up to 38ins. round bust under arms, skirts being 38, 40, and 42 ins. long in front; larger or special sizes made to measure, 1/6 extra.

THE

JOHN NOBLE COSTUMES FOR YOUNG MISSES

are made in the John Noble Cheviot Serge, and trimmed military braid as illustration. A large box-pleat down the centre of the lined bodice, and a fancy pocket at each side of the skirt, complete a charming design at these prices: FROM **8/6**

Lengths	35	38	42	46	50 inches.
Prices	8/6	9/6	10/9	12/-	13/6 each.

Each costume safely packed and sent carriage paid for 9d. extra.

KNOCKABOUT FROCKS FOR GIRLS are also supplied in the **John Noble Cheviot Serge,** with saddle top, long full sleeves, and pocket, at following prices: FROM **1/6**

Lengths	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45 ins.
Prices	1/6	2/-	2/6	3/-	3/6	4/-	4/6	5/-	5/6 ea.

Postage ½d. extra. Lengths stated above are from top of neckband to bottom of skirt in front.

COLOURS: Any of the above garments can be supplied in **Black, Navy, Brown, Myrtle, Bronze Green, Electric Blue, Ruby, Dark Cinnamon, Fawn, or Grey.**

The JOHN NOBLE CHEVIOT SERGE in which the above garments are made is a fabric of world-wide fame and durability, measuring 52ins. wide. The full Dress Length of Six Yards can be supplied for 7/6, or any length at 1/3 the yard. Colours as above. **7/6**

PATTERNS, also **"THE BOOK OF THE SERGE,"** and **FASHION SHEETS** of numerous other designs in Ladies' and Children's Costumes, etc., sent Post Free on application. *Please mention "Short Stories" when ordering.*

JOHN NOBLE LTD., Brook St. Mills, MANCHESTER.

MRS. JACKSON

An artist's wife, residing at Norton, near Malton, states: "I am deeply grateful to you for the good received through taking your Wind Pills. I suffered severely from

INDIGESTION, SPASMS,

and **LIVER COMPLAINT.** The doctors gave me up as incurable, nor did I think it possible for me to recover. I scarcely dared to eat any food, fearing suffocation. Seeing an advertisement of

Page Woodcock's Wind Pills,

I resolved to try them. After taking a few small boxes I lost all the painful symptoms, and now enjoy good health. Publish my statement as you please."

All sufferers from INDIGESTION, LIVER COMPLAINTS, WIND on the STOMACH, SICK HEADACHE, BILIOUSNESS, etc., should avail themselves of this most excellent medicine.

☛ The Wind Pills being purely Vegetable, Tasteless, and Mild, and Tonic in their action, may be taken with perfect safety by the most delicate of either sex.

Of all Medicine Vendors, at **1s. 1½d.** and **2s. 9d.** Post Free for P.O. or Stamps from

PAGE WOODCOCK, LINCOLN.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

TO THE DEAF.

A Gentleman who cured himself of Deafness and Noises in the Head after fourteen years' suffering, will gladly send full particulars of the remedy post free.—Address, H. Clifton, Amberley House, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W.C.

TO TOBACCONISTS COMMENCING.

£20 See Illus. Guide and Catalogue (259 pages), 3d. "How to Open a Cigar Store, from £20 to £2,000." Tobacconists' Outfitting Co., 186, Euston Road, London. (Over 50 years' reputation.) Manager, H. Myers.

S.S. S.S.

PEARSON'S

£100

COUPON.

No. 7

Feb. 15, 1896.

S.S. S.S.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope. Address Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 4, DUKE STREET, VILLIERS STREET, LONDON, W.

ARE YOU LITTLE?

If so, wear the *"A D"* Invisible Elevators (Regd.). Will increase your height up to four inches; the only approved means; detection impossible; simple, inexpensive. Send stamped envelope for particulars to the ORIENTAL TOILET CO. (B 5 Dept.), 87, Strand, London.

DOUGLAS, HUNGERFORD, AND WILLIAMS.

PROFITS PAID DURING 1895.

Jan. 2, £8 per cent., Feb. 1, £6, Mar. 1, £5, April 1, £8, May 1, £7, June 2, £10, July 1, £9, Aug. 1, £9, Sept. 2, £8, Oct. 1, £8, Nov. 1, £7, Dec. 2, £7.

Total for 12 months £92 per cent., an average of nearly £8 PER CENT. PER MONTH.

PROFITS PAID DURING 1896.

Jan. 2 ... ... £6 per cent.

OUR NEW ILLUSTRATED MANUAL mailed free upon request, showing how these profits may be made WITHOUT SPECULATION. Cheques for profits mailed promptly 1st of each month, and for withdrawals of capital on 2nd and 16th of each month. Trial investments of £5 and upwards may be made.

We have not a dissatisfied Client.

DOUGLAS, HUNGERFORD, & WILLIAMS, 5, Copthall Avenue, London, E.C., and 11, Place de la Bourse, Paris.

WE GIVE AWAY

Free of all cost, Hosiery, Dress Skirts, Printed Blouses, and Complete Dress Lengths. Every woman should write for particulars and the most Marvellous Dress Guide, which are sent free on receipt of a Post Card. ADDRESS: **Shakespeare Manufacturing Co. (Dept. 19), Milk St., Manchester.**

TOO STOUT

Dr. Grey's **FAT REDUCING** Pills.

A safe, rapid, and permanent reduction and improvement in health and **breathing** guaranteed. A special preparation kept for stubborn cases (either sex) which have resisted other treatment.

ABDOMINAL OBESITY A SPECIALTY.

2/9 and **4/6** per box, plain wrapper, post free to all parts. Dr. O. GREY, 57, Weymouth St., Portland Pl., London, W.

VIOLIN STRINGS.

4 Best "E's" (samples) 9d., post free.

S. S. CARY, NEWBURY.

TOOTH-ACHE

CURED INSTANTLY BY

BUNTER'S NERVINE

Prevents Decay. Saves Extraction. Sleepless Nights Prevented. Neuralgic Headache and all Nerve Pains Removed by BUNTER'S NERVINE. All Chemists, **1s. 1½d.**

KNOW THYSELF!

YOUR CHARACTER, APTITUDES, and CAREER marvellously described from Handwriting by distinguished Graphologist. Business Guidance. Success ensured. Fee **2s.**

Professor CARONA, F.B.I.M.S., 126, Ledbury Road, Bayswater, W.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A lady who has permanently destroyed **Superfluous** Hairs on herself, will be happy to forward **free, to all** similarly afflicted, full particulars of a simple, **inexpensive** and harmless self-treatment. Send **stamped** addressed envelope in confidence to **Mrs. "T. D."** 87, Strand, London.

Digitized by Google

EDITED BY ARTHUR PEARSON OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY

SHORT STORIES

No. 372.] For the Week ending February 15th, 1896. [ONE PENNY.

THE SLUMBER OF TRELAWNEY.

THERE were certain things in our family which afforded subject for gossip; and this died out, revived, and died out again, according to circumstances. We had wealth—few were richer than the Trelawneys. All admitted that we were just, and even generous in our dealings with others; but we had no intimate friends, and kept apart from our neighbours. We neither made visits nor received visitors. No invited guest ever crossed our threshold, and those who came on business were courteously bowed out when their business was concluded. A meal in the kitchen, and sometimes a trifle of money, was given to a mendicant; but, the meal eaten, and the money taken, the recipient was unceremoniously turned out.

Our servants had been with us from their childhood; they served us well and faithfully, they received good wages, their duties were light, they had kind treatment, their children were born and reared on the place; when superannuated, their wages went on till they died; but they formed no attachment to us, nor we to them. We used our fortune liberally for public purposes, but grew richer every year, for we never lived up to half our income, and with every generation the Trelawney property increased in extent, while it shared the general appreciation of value.

The Trelawneys were long-lived; few died young. But there were few of them born. For six generations, with one exception, but one child followed each marriage, and that was always a son. The exception was with my great-great-grandfather, who had a brother two years younger than himself, named John. The latter's birth was down in the family record as occurring in 1772, but what struck me as singular was the absence of any mention of the year of his death. He seemed to have disappeared and died, probably, in some place and at some time unknown.

For some reason or other a large amount of personal property, supposed to have been his, was held in trust by my great-grandfather, and that trust had been renewed regularly from father to son. I once asked my father about this missing great-granduncle. A deeper gloom than usual overcast his face at my question. "You will know all about it some day," was his reply, and then he went on to speak of something else.

Certainly both my father and grandfather wore a troubled and gloomy look upon their faces. They were a prey to settled melancholy. I never saw them smile. Everyone noted their careworn expression; but none knew why.

There was a mystery. Next to the library, in the northern wing, was a large chamber, as laid down in the architect's plan of a century before. Its shutters were always kept closed and a light was seen there all night long. In the rest of the house gas had been introduced from a small generator on the premises. This solitary lamp was filled and trimmed by my father or grandfather, oil being kept in the library for the purpose. No one but they was allowed to enter the chamber, which was kept locked, and each carried a key.

And three times a day, no matter whether they had breakfasted, dined, or supped, or not, there was a slight refection, not enough for more than one, brought to the library. It was either milk or bouillon—something liquid. They partook of it in secret, the library door being locked until the repast ended. And another remarkable fact was observed: my father and grandfather never went out of the house together. If one went out, the other remained at home, as though to guard the secret of the chamber.

Concerning this mystery there was much discussion among the servants. It was a theme of never-ending interest; but, as either boy or man, when I happened among them it was not touched, and I only inferred their talk by the fact that when I appeared the conversation was hushed. It was more talked about after my mother's death. The idea somehow got abroad that the chamber was a storehouse of treasure. This led to the visit of burglars. But my grandfather, who always slept in the library, having a cabinet bedstead there, shot one of the burglars, and the other escaped. After that there were no more attempts of the kind.

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

So I grew up, often wondering about, but never knowing, the secrets of the closed room. Unlike the rest, I went about a great deal, and, after coming down from Oxford, travelled in this country and on the Continent, in which mode of amusing myself I was encouraged. I had an ample allowance of money, owned several good horses, kept a yacht, and indulged in many other extravagances until I exhausted the resources of mild dissipation. Suddenly my grandfather died, and I was called home.

I found my father looking more gloomy than ever. Between him and my grandfather there had always existed an intimacy more like that of brothers than that between father and son. He asked me into the library as soon as I came, locked the door, and bade me be seated. Then he said:

"Your grandfather's death makes it necessary to impart to you a ghastly secret, which, as a precaution, should be kept by two. You have looked over our family record?" I nodded. "You remember, then, there is no account of the death of your great-grand-uncle John, who mysteriously disappeared eighty years ago. The reason is that he never died at all. He still lives, if his condition may be considered life."

He arose and, taking a key from his pocket, opened the door of the great room and entered, bidding me follow. The chamber was long and lofty. The floor, which had once been waxed and polished, had evidently been neglected, and bore on it neither carpet nor rug. There were half-a-dozen heavy, old-fashioned chairs, and an old-fashioned table ornamented with marquetry, and a heavily-curtained bedstead. My father threw aside the bed-curtains and pointed to a form upon the bed.

At first I thought it was the wax figure of a very old man, but a second glance showed me that it breathed. The eyes were closed; the face wrinkled and pallid. It seemed less like one asleep than as a man whose animation was nearly suspended. The features, in spite of the deep wrinkles, and the fact that the lower part of the face was hidden by a long white beard, were those of the Trelawneys, all of whom had marked and peculiar faces. I suppose that I looked inquiry, for my father replied to my thoughts, though I said nothing.

"This has been the secret curse of the family for eighty years, and will continue until that poor old frame wears out. Come back to the library, and I will tell you all."

With the evidence before me, and the fact that it was told by my father, whose truthfulness no one could doubt, I was forced to credit the story. Thus it was:

Guy and John had been very much attached to each other; and when Guy married, John still remained in the house. They were co-heirs, but that mattered little—they practically held but one purse. The fatality attending the family came. My great-grandmother died, leaving my grandfather, a boy of two years. My great-grandfather did not marry again, though time soon softened his grief. One day, when he had begun to receive company, his guest was a French gentleman, a M. Delille.

After dinner, the guest happened to mention that he was a pupil of M. Mesmer, and was well versed in his system. Some good-natured scepticism being evinced as to the power of producing hypnotic sleep, he offered to experiment on his host, and did so successfully. Then he proposed to try it on John, who assented. He was equally successful there. He put a number of questions to John while in the mesmeric state, which were answered, to his brother's great delight.

The windows were open as the day was warm. They were what was called at the time French windows, opening to the floor, on a narrow balcony with a low railing. One of the answers seemed so comical that the Frenchman fell into a fit of laughter, so violent that he lost his balance, and fell backwards out of the window and over the balcony to the ground—the chamber being on the second storey. My great-grandfather ran to assist him, but he was past assistance. The man had broken his neck.

A doctor was immediately summoned, but his examination only confirmed the terrible truth. When that was over the elder brother, Guy, went in to John, who, in the excitement of the moment, had been forgotten. He found him still in the mesmeric stupor, and tried to awaken him. Failing in this, he called up the family physician, to whom he detailed the circumstances. Every effort was in vain. The doctor insisted that it was a cataleptic fit; he pooh-poohed at Mesmer and his devices. But whatever it was, John could not be aroused, and was put to bed.

Thus he had remained through these long years. To avoid scandal, the secret had been kept in the family. His food, which was given him by a stomach-tube, was of a liquid character, and had served to maintain life. His brother had attended him, performing the most servile of offices faithfully and well. When his son was near manhood, he had let him into the secret. When the latter married, the wife, in time, was made acquainted with it. Thus it had gone from father to son, and on down, the Trelawneys being chained to a living corpse.

Of course, I accepted a share in the responsibility of the secret. What else could I do? But I never married, though often urged by my father. I would wait, I said, until all was over.

John Trelawney was now over a hundred and eight years old. He could not last much longer. When I asked my father why no attempt had been made to awaken the mesmerised man, he replied that the secret of doing that had died with Delille. This stimulated me. I eagerly read and studied all about the subject, and when it came my turn to wait on the old man, I made a number of experimental reverse passes, but always in vain.

Two years after this, my father exhibited marked symptoms of an incurable disease, with which he lingered for two more years, when he died.

The secret had now become my sole burden. John Trelawney, if we could give the corpse a living name, had been reduced almost to a skeleton, withered, and dried up, but still alive. I had given up all hopes of resuscitating him; but he exercised over me a grim fascination. I used to remain after I had fed him with the stomach-tube, and sit and read an hour or so, with a bottle of wine before me, though I only sipped a single glass. One day I had taken a solitary pamphlet—a German magazine, rather—and on glancing over its pages I noticed a paper on "Hypnotism." The only thing in it which excited me was a statement of the author that there was no difficulty in arousing one from the artificial sleep provided the reverse passes were continued without intermission, and the operator had faith in his own powers *and an unconquerable will.*

"I know," I said, "that I have all the will-power in which the Trelawneys have been deficient, and I will control this man. He shall awaken."

I began making the reverse passes over the prostrate form, and continued them without intermission until my arms ached. But I kept on. "You shall awaken." I said, and I meant it.

Digitized by Google

Suddenly the figure beneath me uttered a deep sigh.

How my heart throbbed! I continued the passes.

John Trelawney opened his eyes, looked round, half-closed his eyes, and fell back. I ran to the table, filled a glass of wine, and poured it between his lips. To my intense delight, he swallowed it, though apparently with difficulty. It seemed to invigorate him. He half raised himself, while I supported him, and looking in my face, said, in a thin, piping voice:

"Where am I? Who are you?"

"I am Guy Trelawney," I replied.

"Guy Trelawney! Nonsense! You are not my brother. Ah!" he continued, looking round, and then at me. "I see it now. This is a dream."

With that he closed his eyes.

I put him gently down, and procured another glass of wine. "Take this, Uncle John," I said; "it will do you good."

"He calls me Uncle John," he muttered. "Just now he wanted to pass for my brother. What a queer dream! Wine, eh! Well, it does seem natural in taste."

He drank the wine, and I supported him in a sitting posture by piling the pillows, reinforced by a chair at his back. Then, as it was growing dark, I drew a match from the box, and, after igniting it, lit the lamp.

"What on earth is that?" he cried. "Did you get the light by rubbing the ends of your fingers? This is certainly the oddest dream that ever entered a man's noddle."

I told him it was a friction match, and lit another to show how the light was produced. He was very much amused, and listened with a sardonic smile while I explained the mode of manufacture, and the materials used. "We find them indispensable when there are not only fires to make, but so many gas-jets to light."

"Gas-jets?" he said inquiringly.

"Let me assist you to dress," I said. "It is some hours yet till bedtime. We will go to the library, which is more comfortable."

He had a dazed look as I said this, and was still more astonished when I brought out a pair of trousers and a dressing-gown.

"Ah!" he said, "these are the new things people are wearing now—what they call trousers. Bah! Where are my breeches?"

I went to the chiffonier in which his clothes had been always kept, and drew forth his breeches. I found them literally riddled.

"Uncle John," I said, producing them, "they are ruined by moths."

"What!" he said, "my best breeches cut up in this way! What the—oh! but it's all a dream, of course. Well, I'll try the others."

He thrust himself into the trousers, buttoned and braced them, put on the dressing-gown and laughed.

"They flap about my legs. Legs! Why, I am notorious for my muscular calves, and my legs look like pipe-stems.

"Now, what could have led me to such a dream as this. I must have been talking of trousers before I went to bed, and trousers suggested legs, and—oh, the development of the idea is quite clear!"

I assisted him—he was evidently very weak—into the library, and installed him in an easy-chair, into which he sank with a sigh of pleasure. Then I lit the gas, and he eyed me curiously.

"I see that, too," he muttered to himself. "Guy and I were talking of this new project of lighting London by inflammable air—gas, they called it. That accounts for it. But the friction matches! However, if I can remember the process and the materials when I wake up, and if it works in reality as it does in a dream, I shall be known as a famous inventor. But the queerest thing is, that while I know it is a dream, I have to keep on dreaming."

"Shall I order supper?" I said; "you have had nothing but milk."

"Milk!" he replied. "If there is anything I detest, it is milk. Order what you like."

I rang the bell, and when the servant appeared ordered supper to be served in the library. When Peter—who, impassive as he generally was, displayed by a look his astonishment at the stranger's presence—had gone out, John Trelawney said:

"That's another of the dream people. I never saw *him* before, and when I wake up won't see him again. But what—what the deuce is that?"

A mingled look of terror, doubt, and amusement went over his face as he lifted the end of his long, white beard, which he now observed for the first time. He passed his hand upward and traced the beard to his chin, and then he gave it a sharp tug.

"Of all the farrago of nonsense which comes to a man's head in dreams, this is the most absurd. A long white beard on me, a man of twenty-eight, and heavens!" he continued, as he caught a glimpse of his face in the mirror over the mantel, "there's white hair and wrinkles to correspond! This matches the thin legs. I shouldn't wonder if I turned to an old woman next, with a black satin dress, and a lot of *falbalas*."

Here he burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"What is the matter with my voice, I wonder," he exclaimed; "it's of a piece with my beard, and my wrinkles, and—my legs. If I were awake, and looked like this, and talked so, I should think I had got to be eighty at least. Won't I have a fine tale to tell to Guy in the morning."

Peter came in with a tray bearing plates, dishes, and eatables, and John with the tea-service. When they had spread the cloth on the library-table, and arranged everything my rather stately housekeeper, Mrs. Lang, sailed in.

"Mrs. Lang," I said, "let me present you to Mr. John Trelawney, who remains with us, and to whom everyone in the house will pay as much deference and attention as to me. Uncle John, this is the housekeeper, Mrs. Lang."

Mrs. Lang was evidently mystified, but she was equal to the occasion. She performed an elaborate curtsey. Uncle John, as a polite, old-young gentleman, rose and bent his body in acknowledgment.

"Now," I said, "no one need wait, as we are to have some conversation on family matters. I can even dispense with *your* attendance, Mrs. Lang."

The housekeeper sniffed faintly, but departed with the others.

"Now for the feast of Barmecide," said Uncle John gaily. "No! the tea tastes as natural as if it were tea. These chops, too, what is the matter with my teeth? Why, hang it! they're half gone. I see, all in keeping—*sans* teeth, *sans* everything."

"Uncle John," I interposed, "you must excuse me, if I caution you to be careful about your eating. As your stomach has been accustomed solely to liquid food for over eighty-four years, solid matter might——"

"Liquid food! Eighty-four years!" he burst out. "Now what could have led to such a mental vagary even.

Digitized by Google

in a dream? And knowing this to be a dream, why can't I wake myself?"

The supper passed off, though Uncle John would pause occasionally, and tap his head and smile. He evinced signs of fatigue shortly after, and I led him to a chamber, where I assisted him to disrobe, and left him.

The next morning, finding he was very weak, I had chocolate served to him in his room. The servants were evidently puzzled, and I could fancy the below-stairs parliament in active session. But they were well drilled, and evinced no surprise in our presence, and made no inquiries as to how and when this newly-found relative had come to be a visitor. About eleven o'clock my guest rose, and I assisted him to the library, where we had breakfast. While we were eating, he was startled by the screams of a steam-whistle—the railway passing within two hundred yards of the house.

"Wha—what is that?"

"Oh, nothing," I said, "but the train. We have a railway crossing over the estate, and a station within a quarter of a mile from the house."

"Railway!—train!"

The servants were listening and I changed the subject by finding fault with an egg which was overdone. When we had finished I took Uncle John into the library, got him an easy chair, and handed him one of the morning papers. He looked at it in amazement, and repeated the title.

"Why, I never heard of it before," he said; "and the type is so small that I can't read it. Oh, I see: white hair, wrinkles, thin legs, weakness, poor teeth, and so failing sight is in keeping. I wonder I am not deaf."

I took grandfather's spectacles from a drawer.

"Try these," I said.

He put them on, but shook his head.

"Perhaps you were near-sighted when you were young," I said.

"Was! I *am* near sighted."

"Try these, then," and I handed him a pair used by my father.

"Ah! these do nicely. But what stuff is this? Ocean steamer! Six days and eighteen hours!"

"Yes," I said, "quite a fast voyage across the Atlantic, but there have been faster."

"The Queen received the American Minister at Balmoral, to which he has been specially invited. Balmoral! the Queen! Queen of England, I suppose. But why not the King? Balmoral! where on earth is that?"

"It is Queen Victoria's seat in the Highlands."

"And who the—I beg your pardon—but who is Queen Victoria?"

"She is the present reigning sovereign, and succeeded William the Fourth forty-seven years since."

"Oh, she did. did she? and who was William the Fourth?"

"He was Prince William Henry."

"What, that midshipman who got trounced? But where was the Prince of Wales?"

"He succeeded his father, you know, as George the Fourth, and died without issue."

"No, I don't know. But, 'by telegraph.' What does that mean, and how do you get news from India, as I see you do here in a day? Am I expected to believe that? The dream grows queerer and queerer."

I explained the action of the electric telegraph, but he did not seem to comprehend it.

"The fantasies are wilder and wilder. The lightning is made a courier; by-and-bye it will be bottled up for lamps, and the sun will paint our portraits."

"All that has been done long since," I replied. "But the next train is nearly due, and with this field-glass you can see it from the balcony. There—I hear it in the distance. You needn't rise, I'll wheel your chair to the open window—so."

The train soon came in sight, dashed on, turned a curve, and we could hear it slow down as it approached the station. Uncle John's hands shook, partly with weakness, partly with excitement, but he seemed to have had a good sight of the engine and carriages. He sat there reflecting.

How was I to impress him with the fact of his real condition. It would have to be done, some time or other. But would it overturn his reason? I mused over it.

"Well, Nephew Guy, as you call yourself, what are you thinking about?"

"Pray," I returned, "do you remember Monsieur Delille?"

"Yes; where is he? He tried to put me to sleep, but failed."

"Uncle John, he did not fail. He succeeded."

"He did, you say. That is a little hard to believe, even in a dream."

"You have been asleep ever since, and were so until I awakened you."

"And for how many hours, pray?"

"Eighty-four years. You fell into a hypnotic slumber in 1800, and this is 1884."

Uncle John broke into a fit of laughter; but seeing my serious face, paused, and then deliberately bit his finger.

"I shall be awake presently," he said, looking at his finger. "And yet this pain—tell me all about it."

I told him all, as I have written it, but with more detail. Then I added: "Look at yourself in yonder glass. You have grown old during your artificial slumber. Action has been suspended, but not the processes of life. Read the journal you have thrown down, and you will see that the world has moved, and you have not. Clasp my hand—there, is that not flesh and blood—real, and not visionary?"

"And brother Guy?"

I took down the family record and read:

"Guy IV., has issue:

"1. *Guy* V., *born* at Trelawney Park, April 3rd, 1770; *m.* December 28th, 1794, Mary Louisa, eldest daughter of Lawrence and Gertrude Gansevoort, of Gansevoort Manor; *widower*, June 3rd, 1798; *died*, May 9th, 1855.

"2. *John*, *b.* February 1st, 1772."

"Poor old Guy," murmured Uncle John. "But go on."

"Guy V. had issue:

"1. *Guy* VI., *b.* February 1st, 1796; *m.* Alice, second daughter of Pierce and Mary Compton, June 20th, 1818; *widower*, June 9th, 1821; *d.* March 19th, 1878.

"Guy VI. has issue:

"1. *Guy* VII., *b.* October 9th, 1820; *m.* April 1st, 1850, to Grace Amaranth, sole daughter of John George Pigott, of Pigott Park, Leicestershire; *widower*, May 4th, 1870; *d.* February 5th, 1882.

"Guy VII. had issue:

"*Guy* VIII., *b.* May 1st, 1856."

Digitized by Google

The truth seemed to possess the old man's mind. He looked at his hands and feet, felt his beard, and his countenance assumed a look of extreme terror. Would he go mad?

Suddenly he burst into a flood of tears, and I felt relieved.

"This—this is cruel," he said at length, with a sob.

"We did all we could, Uncle John," I pleaded.

"Yes, I know—I know. But to keep me in a living grave, to wake old, decrepit—it was better to have let me die while I was unconscious. I am weak—I would like to lie down."

"Do so, Uncle John, you will be better by dinner-time."

I assisted him to his chamber, where he laid down on a lounge, and I left him to his repose.

Just before dinner I sent Peter to his room to bid him prepare for the meal. The servant came back. "The old gentleman seems a little out of his head, sir. He told me to put a tinder-box in the mantelshelf."

I hurried to the chamber, where I found the old man muttering to himself. I spoke to him, saying that dinner would soon be ready.

"You are there," he said; "and you come to tell me this is no dream, and I am a hundred and twelve years old."

Then he stared vacantly and worked his fingers in a convulsive way.

I sent at once for Dr. Quitman, our family physician, while I managed to persuade the old man to get to bed. When the physician came, and before he saw his patient, though, I gave him none of the previous facts, I stated that he was my great-great-granduncle, and that he was a hundred and twelve years old. Dr. Quitman looked surprised at the relationship, and the gleam in his eye showed that he doubted the age given. He went with me to the chamber, and made the customary examination. Uncle John answering his questions in monosyllables, not always as though he perfectly understood.

"Well, doctor?" I inquired when we had come out.

"He is certainly very old," replied the physician; "he may be close upon a hundred. There is no disease—the powers of life are simply giving way. By a careful administration of stimulants—I should recommend Huxham's tincture—and by judicious nourishment, you may prolong life a little, but he will probably peaceably fade out in a very few days."

And he did. On the third day, growing weaker, and apparently without any feeling of pain, he passed away. I had my finger on his pulse. It was very weak and slow. As I stood there he muttered, and I stooped to listen. He murmured:

"Guy, it was as real—you can have no idea——"

Here he stopped. I pressed the artery, but it had ceased to beat.

THOMAS ENGLISH.

MELODY

A Musical Magazine.

The First Number will appear on February 29 for March 1.

PRICE SIXPENCE MONTHLY.

48 PAGES.

SHEET MUSIC SIZE.

The Contents will consist of original works, both vocal and instrumental, by the best and most popular authors.

Digitized by Google

WHEN THE BIRDS BEGIN TO SING

BY WINIFRED GRAHAM. *Author of "Through the Valley," "Six First-Class Passengers," etc.*

SUMMARY.

Philip Roche marries Eleanor Grebby, daughter of a farmer, and they spend their honeymoon on the Continent. On their return to Richmond, Eleanor becomes friendly with a frivolous widow, Mrs. Mounteagle, against her husband's wishes.

CHAPTER V.

"THE FLY THAT SIPS TREACLE IS LOST IN THE SWEETS."

"I AM tired of arguing the subject," declares Philip hotly, rising from his chair and pacing the room. "If you *will* disregard my wishes and go your own way, well——"

"Let me, that's all!" retorts Eleanor.

"No wonder you have hardly a single friend in Richmond, if your whole time is spent with Mrs. Mounteagle," he replied.

"I don't want other friends—I dislike them, Philip, and what is the good of pretending friendship for people you don't care a button about? There is not a woman in the place that can hold a candle to Giddy."

"Oh, it's 'Giddy' now, is it?"

"Why not? I have known her nearly three months."

"Yes; and every month has been one too many. Do you think I cannot see the harm she is doing you? We might have led a happy, contented life if she were not here to poison it. What did you think of your home—before you met her? Everything was perfect! What did you say of it after?"

"Dowdy—old-fashioned—run to seed. Look at the transformation! Isn't my drawing-room a poem? Has not 'Liberty' descended like the goddess of Beauty on our abode, and made it the envy of our neighbours? Giddy has practically built me up, Philip. I owe her my dressmaker, my tailor, my style, my hats, my——"

"Oh! spare me," he interrupts, "I have heard it so often."

"Dear old fellow, *don't* be angry," coaxes Eleanor, with her old cajoling manner. "It is very hard for a poor little woman to be left alone all day, while her better half is frivoling in the City with stocks and shares, and all sorts of nice amusing things. There really is no harm in Giddy, and she's so awfully clever and entertaining."

"But I do not approve of the people you meet at her house, nor your frequent visits to town together. I don't wish my wife to be constantly seen with a woman of doubtful reputation."

"Nonsense about her reputation, it's all bosh! People are jealous of her beauty that say nasty things. She told me so herself. Besides, we only do a little shopping, and it is so dull going all by oneself."

"How do, dear?"

Eleanor has crept into his arms, and is soothing his ruffled feelings with caresses.

"It is only because I love you, Eleanor," he says, with more passionately, hungering devotion than of yore. "Her companionship is not good for you, and she is always taking you away from me. That sounds selfish, doesn't it?"

"Well, I forgive you," she whispers, "if you will be less ferocious in the future. I declare when you walk up and down—like this," imitating his stride, "and show the whites of your eyes—*so!* I want to hide under the sofa and scream."

"Oh! Eleanor, was I such a bear?"

"Much worse than a bear; he is in a cage, and cannot get out. You just stand and laugh at him, and please him with a biscuit, or tease him with a feather."

"I didn't want to quarrel before going, only you started the subject of Mrs. Mounteagle, and it is rather a red rag, you know, Eleanor, since I objected from the first."

"But I am so wickedly wilful," she sighs, peeping through her eyelashes coquettishly. She has caught the "eye-lash" trick from her next-door neighbour.

"I am sorry, dear, to have to stay in town to-night, but it

Digitized by Google

is most important. You won't give up your party at the Hillier's?"

"Oh! no. I shall go alone. It is only one of their deadly musical evenings, with about three second-rate professionals, and a sprinkling of local talent. The Misses Hillier play the harp and violin, with particularly red arms and bony elbows, their sister-in-law sings in a throaty contralto, and the ices run out before ten."

"Is Mrs. Mounteagle asked?"

"They don't know each other, and Giddy is so glad. It gives her nearly a fit to look at them."

"Ah! yes, I remember Mrs. Hillier telling me she had not called."

"Now you are beginning again."

"But is it a fact, dear, people *don't* call?"

"And just as we had made it up, too," putting her hand over Philip's mouth.

"Well, I'll say no more. At least, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing you won't be with her to-night."

"Poor Giddy!" sighs Eleanor as he leaves; "how she is misjudged!"

"Mrs. Mounteagle," announces Sarah.

"How do, dear?" cries the widow sweetly, pressing Eleanor's cheek.

Then as the door closes: "I don't like that maid of yours, she shows one in as if one were a dressmaker or sister of mercy, and always looks at me as if my bonnet were crooked. You really ought to get a man, it gives such a much better appearance to the place."

"I do not believe Philip would have one."

"My dear, a man is the last subject I should ever think of consulting my husband on. By-the-way, Eleanor, my *fiancé* has turned up again. You know he went abroad to grow, and was not to come back for six months, but three seem to have nearly killed him. He has had typhoid fever in Antwerp, and then took a trip to New York, where he got jaundice. I must introduce you next Sunday, he is going to drive down."

"You never told me his name."

"Didn't I? *Bertie*—Herbert Dallison."

"Oh!" with an expressive intonation. "Is he fond of ices?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"They are very unwholsome, and—and you said he had been ill."

"You are going to the Hillier's to-night," Mrs. Mounteagle says, unfolding a parcel on her lap. "You intend wearing your white silk, I believe."

"Yes. It is good enough for them."

"I should think so, the cut of the skirt is lovely, but I am not altogether satisfied with the severe bodice. I want you to wear this fichu of mine, it is a perfect gem."

She holds out a cloud of spangled gauze.

"How lovely!" cries Eleanor, flinging her arms round the widow's neck.

"You're very welcome to it."

"Philip is deserting me to-night," continues Eleanor—"business in London."

"How dull you will be going and returning to your party alone. I know!" (her face lightening up as with some magic inspiration) "I'll come and stay the night with you, dear, see you dressed, and have a real good gossip up in your room about those stupid Hillier's afterwards."

Philip's words return to Eleanor.

"At least you will not be together this evening."

Yet what can she do? Besides it will be such fun to have Giddy.

So the plan is settled, and that evening Mrs. Mounteagle arrives in a flowing tea-gown, her maid unpacking a dainty dressing-bag with gold-topped ornaments, and hanging up a dress for the morning. Giddy sits in a low arm-chair watching Eleanor's toilette.

"Sarah is doing your hair abominably!" she exclaims. "You will look a fright. Here, let me show you, my good girl," addressing the maid in the superior drawl she adopts towards menials. "Twist the coil at the top—so, like a teapot handle, and let the side pieces wave loosely over the ears. You don't want to make a guy of your mistress, do you?"

Sarah resents the interference, but between them Eleanor's coiffure is eventually arranged.

"Now you are lovely, a sight for sore eyes," declares Giddy Mounteagle. "Yet what is the good after all in being beautiful for such a dowdy set? They will only hate you for it, as they hate me, the fools! We cannot help being well favoured."

"And she calls 'erself a lady!" says Sarah scoffingly, to Judith later on. "She's as different to our young mistress as chalk to cheese."

"I don't like leaving you alone," declares Eleanor after dinner.

"Afraid I shall steal something?" asks Giddy, laughing.

"Here, let me show you, my good girl."

"Don't fret, my dear, I shall be quite happy in this glorious book-land. Mr. Roche has a most enviable collection. I have rather a headache, and shall go to bed early and read. I never sleep before two or three in the morning, so don't ring, but just throw a stone at my window. I should love to let you in."

"Just as you please, dear. It is all the same to me."

"You need not sit up for Mrs. Roche," says Mrs. Mounteagle, when she goes to her room, "and, Sarah! bring me coffee in the morning, my nerves will not stand tea."

Flinging open her window, Giddy lets the chilly night air mingle with the fumes of her cigarette, as she lies on a sofa before the fire.

In the meanwhile the beautiful Mrs. Roche is causing quite a sensation at the Hillier's, who are not so dowdy after all. The smartest Richmond girls arrive on this occasion, yet the men crowd round Eleanor, who, elated by success, converses in a most effervescing style.

She finds herself using Giddy's expressions, stealing Giddy's ideas, remembering her droll sayings, and repeating them second-hand.

They seem to go down, and amuse Eleanor as much as her listeners. She has just told a smart story (rather too smart

Digitized by Google

She is fascinated.

for the occasion), when her glance falls on a man in the doorway. He is looking straight across at her with strangely magnetic eyes. He is tall, slim, handsome. She stops speaking. The stranger awakes a new interest; she forgets the others, she wants him.

He seeks out the youngest Miss Hillier, and asks for an introduction.

"Mrs. Roche—Mr. Quinton."

Two magic words make them friends. He takes the seat of honour by her side, monopolises the conversation, and eventually disperses her admiring circle.

Eleanor is glad. She is fascinated by the profound interest he displays when she speaks of herself. Besides, from what he tells her she gathers he is a man of genius, destroyed by pessimism, given to analyse human hearts and discover their misery, to look deeply into the lives of his fellow creatures, below the platitudes and conventionalities. He is richly endowed with the divine gift of sympathy, the supreme art of discrimination, yet occasionally reveals the witty spirits of the cynic, who is cynical to please.

He sees through Eleanor's society prattle the guileless mind, the childish innocence. He recognises that as yet she is undeveloped—he mentally reviews her. She is absurd, improbable, and therefore fascinating. She is like a book with the best chapters torn out—you long to find them and never rest till you succeed.

Palmists or clairvoyants would prophesy a future for her, simply through looking in her eyes, but whether notoriety is to be won by downfalling or uprising were better left unstated. Eleanor, he decides, is neither highly-strung nor excitable, but outspoken, fresh, and conscious of her beauty, without conceit. He thinks he loves her at first sight, the lukewarm love arising from admiration, which a man may feel towards a married woman, without blame, but at the close of the evening he is certain of it.

"What have we been talking about all to-night?" asks Eleanor, with a puzzled frown, and a smile which counteracts it. "So much was frivolous and foolish I cannot remember."

"Yet every word is hidden in some secret cell of your brain. Oh, that the secret cells could be opened and revealed to our nearest and dearest. What countless forgotten treasures might be restored."

"Or what ill-spoken words and evil quarrels revived," adds Eleanor wisely.

"Thus speaks a guilty conscience," he retorts. "I could sum up my life on a sheet of foolscap. 'Preface: apparent folly, covering intents and purposes. A boyhood of ambition, a manhood of misfortune.'"

"Misfortune!"

"Yes, since I grew to realise facts; to see men and women as they *are*, not as they appear! Sometimes the bare word 'reality' fills me with such loathing for this paltry world, with its pigmy minds and soulless bodies, that I can hardly control my contempt. I pull myself together, and pray for a new set of nerves, a stronger heart, and a better flow of healthy blood to the brain."

"What a pity that nerves cannot be purchased like false teeth," says Eleanor laughing.

"Nerves are the finest satire on our human organisation, and our bodies, each a theatre of perpetual activity, the most confusing mystery of all. I believe in a dual nature existing in men and women, but the difficulties which bar our progress to perfect knowledge of each other cannot be overcome."

"Things that can't be understood are invariably irritating," sighs Eleanor.

"Some day we will think it out together," he whispers, waving her fan gently. "We shall meet again, Mrs. Roche" —speaking confidently—"for have we not a mutual friend in Mrs. Mounteagle, whom I regret is not here to-night?"

"Yes. It is strange that we should both know her."

Eleanor has risen, and is holding out her hand for the fan.

"You are not going?"

"Look at the hour! I shall be disgraced if I stay longer."

She leaves him, and bids her hostess good-night.

He is waiting in the hall for a last word.

"May I call your carriage?"

"I did not order it, as I only live three doors off."

"Then may I escort you?"

Eleanor glances at him confidingly with her large innocent eyes.

"Yes; I meant you to."

Mr. Quinton smiles, and takes her arm as they step out into the darkness.

"I knew somebody would see me home," she says, the old, childish Eleanor breaking through the "Giddy" manner. "I thought it would be much more fun than driving this step."

"Then it was premeditated."

She laughs softly.

"I wish it were not so near," murmurs Mr. Quinton.

"Mrs. Mounteagle wanted to let me in—I believe out of simple curiosity. I am to throw stones at her window. Quite romantic, isn't it?"

"May I have a shot?" he asks. "Which is the pane of beauty's shrine?"

"There, on the left of my room," pointing upwards.

A handful of gravel flies through the air. Rattle, rattle on the glass.

Then Giddy appears in a white *robe de chambre*, her dark hair falling in waves about her shoulders.

"All right, I am coming down."

A moment later she stands before them, laughing and shaking hands with Carol Quinton, two small, bare feet peeping from under her airy garb, her hair still unfettered.

"It is a delightful surprise to see *you*, Carol," she cries. "I have sent all the servants to bed, Eleanor, but told them to leave out some aspic and champagne, as I know the Hilliers starve their guests. What do you say to an impromptu supper party? It would be so delightfully unconventional."

She has dragged Carol into the hall and closed the door.

"Yes, do come in," echoes Eleanor feebly, pleased and yet awed by Giddy's suggestion. She is looking somewhat

Digitized by Google

shrewdly at those delicate pink toes, and the dark mane falling over the white gown,

"Shall I get you some shoes?" she whispers.

"No, dear, Nature is better than leather, and more *négligé*."

She speaks in a tone that silences Eleanor, who feels she has been dense and awkward.

"Come along," says Giddy, leading the way, and lighting the silver candelabra in the dining-room. "Do make Eleanor take off that heavy fur cloak, Carol. Oh! isn't this nice?" as he fills her glass with champagne. "Was there ever a jollier little trio?" leaning back in her chair and surveying the other two complacently. "Pass me a brown sandwich, I am hungry if you are not, and the stuff inside them gives you an appetite. What do you call it?—something beginning with an 'L.'"

The nectar of the gods puts a bright sparkle into Eleanor's eyes, their lustrous beauty gleams on Giddy and Carol Quinton in luxurious contentment. She permits her guests to smoke, and tries a whiff from Mrs. Mounteagle's cigarette, finally lighting one up on her own behalf.

She dislikes smoking in reality, but considers it smart to imitate the widow.

"Have you really missed hearing Kitty Bell at the 'Frivolity'?" asks Mrs. Mounteagle, giving Carol a light from her cigarette. "My dear boy, she is perfectly charming, the most *piquante* little singer of the day. Why the chorus of her last song has haunted me ever since—the tune, not the words. It went something like this, as far as I can remember:

"Poor little Flo,
How should she know?
A simple country maiden
From the wilds of Pimlico."

As Giddy Mounteagle sings the lines a latchkey turns in the hall lock, footsteps advance down the passage, the dining-room door opens, and Philip Roche stands before them!

Philip Roche stands before them!

CHAPTER VI.

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread.

Eleanor's blood runs cold at the sight of her husband. She knows well what he will think of this impromptu supper-party. Giddy's feet for the moment are mercifully concealed by the table-cloth. She half rises, however, and stretches out her hand to Mr. Roche.

"Eleanor was just wishing you would come back," she murmurs sweetly.

"I returned quite by chance," he answers coldly, knowing her words to be untrue. "Brown could not put me up after all," turning to his wife, "so I drove down."

"Philip, this is Mr. Quinton; he kindly saw me home, and—and——"

"We persuaded him to come in," adds Giddy, as Carol, grasping the situation, says pleasantly:

"Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Roche."

But, though Philip is far too gentlemanly to show his disapproval, all the hilarity has gone from the evening. Perhaps it is due to Eleanor's sudden tranquility, the pallor of her face, and nervous hesitating speech. She is no adept at concealing her emotions or "passing things off" like Giddy and Carol. She leaves the rest of the conversation to them, and while Philip is seeing Mr. Quinton out slips upstairs for Giddy's shoes and beseeches her to put them on.

"My husband will think it so odd," she whispers. "I saw him looking at your hair."

"Yes," replies Mrs. Mounteagle, "men always admire it. But don't be alarmed, dear, I am far too fond of you to care about making a friend of your husband." Then she saunters up to bed, with a pitying glance at Eleanor's pretty, troubled face.

"I wonder if she'll have sense enough to hold her own?" thinks Giddy. "Poor little fool, to be sat upon already!" She hears them come up, and creeping from her room steals on tip-toe to their door, with her ear to the keyhole.

There are high words within, and some unpleasant allusions to herself in distinctly masculine tones. Eleanor is heard crying, but her tears do not hasten a reconciliation.

Giddy goes quietly back.

"Bah!" she exclaims, stretching out her hands to the fire. "What rot! As if there was any harm!"

She stirs up the blaze and laughs. "I shall breakfast in bed," she says to herself.

* * * * * * *

"He doesn't understand me. He wants me to be so good, so uninteresting, so *domesticated!* I believe he married me for that. Oh! oh! oh!"

Mrs. Roche is wringing her hands and sobbing on the sofa.

"Another quarrel?" sighs Giddy, stroking Eleanor's soft hair. "Come, come, this won't do. Pluck up your courage, go your own way, act as you like, and laugh at your husband. He *can't* scold you if you laugh! Tears will only gratify his vanity, besides they are disastrous to beauty

Digitized by Google

Once your eyes become swollen, and your nose red, you can no longer hold your own. Your sense of superiority is gone, you are undone!"

"How awful I look," sighs Eleanor, rising and facing the glass. "I hope Sarah will say 'not at home' if anybody calls."

Steals to their door.

"I am not going to let you stay in and mope, just because Mr. Roche happened to leave in a lecturing mood this morning. I have arranged a little tea in town at my club."

"Your club? I did not know you had one."

"Oh! yes, and I am on the committee. Nearly all the artists and literary women have their clubs nowadays, so I and some friends started one for people who do absolutely nothing. It is very useful to members with jealous husbands. We call it the 'Butterflies' Club,' a land of cosy corners and rendezvous. You really will have to join it Eleanor, if Philip goes on like this. I will put you up at our next meeting. It is rather an expensive luxury, ten guineas a year, and a Turkish bath attached."

Giddy places her arm affectionately through Eleanor's, and leads her to the door.

"Come up and dress dear, my carriage will be here in half an hour, and I don't intend going without you."

Eleanor cheers up at the prospect. She is like an April day.

Giddy fans her friend's flushed face, rubs some powder gently with her fingers round the swollen eyes, and showers eau-de-Cologne on the burning forehead.

"Do not throw yourself into any more fevers," she says; "life is too short, and sorrow too long."

Eleanor is soon attired in green velvet and fur, for Mrs. Mounteagle declares it is necessary to be smart at the Butterflies' Club.

They drive away together in the widow's snug little brougham.

Herbert Dallison is waiting outside the club door to receive them; he starts, colours, and stares at Eleanor as Giddy introduces him.

"Say 'how do you do?' prettily," she cries in a bantering tone, "and don't gape like an overgrown school-boy, if you love me, Bertie!"

Mr. Dallison holds out a limp hand in a grey glove, smiles feebly, and thinks of the "relics" and the cat!

"Why are you not at the Junior Conservative?" murmurs Eleanor, laughing softly, "instead of dangling round the 'Butterflies'!"

"Ah! you remember my card."

"Yes, I have it still. I hope you will make Giddy a good husband," speaking demurely.

"I ought to, after all I've gone through for her sake. It is a mercy I have come home alive after my illnesses, and the dangerous young people I met on the Continent."

"Let me introduce you to our coming member, the Butterfly that is to be," says Giddy, and Eleanor turns to face Carol Quinton.

Mrs. Mounteagle laughs merrily at her astonished look. "I did not tell you he was coming, but now we are just a cosy quartette."

"I am afraid," murmurs Mr. Quinton, "that my visit to your charming home the other evening was ill-timed. Mr. Roche seemed somewhat taken aback by my presence."

"Yes," stammers Eleanor, growing red.

"I was so vexed *you* should be annoyed," he replies, "that I could not go home, but paced the pavement for an hour, watching the light in your window."

Eleanor's eyes expand. She has a way of looking "surprise" without saying it, and the look lasts quite a long while, during which an ordinary person would have expressed their feelings several times over. Then the wonderment fades like a magic-lantern slide, and she talks of something else.

"Have you ever seen the sun burst suddenly through a fog? It is like your smile," says Carol, gazing into Eleanor's face. "Why don't you always smile?"

"Because I am not always happy," she responds quietly.

A pained expression steals into the man's eyes, and Eleanor flushes rosy under his look. It is deep, searching, admiring; it confuses her. She wants to push it away like something oppressive, a funeral veil dark and heavy, or a chloroformed handkerchief, stifling breath!

"Not happy!"

The words break from him with bitter irony.

"You have youth, beauty, personal magnetism, the power to charm, eyes that might wreck a life every day in the year. You need not scheme for love nor demand it. It is yours by natural right. Why is not your life one of wildest exhilaration, conquests, pleasures? Who could deny you anything, Mrs. Roche?"

Eleanor knows well, but is too loyal to say. She would sooner bite out her tongue than answer "Philip!" Yet he would rob her of the companionship of her dearest friend, would deny her intercourse with Carol Quinton, could he hear these low-whispered words of adulation! As she thinks of it, her husband takes the form of some heartless monster, sapping her youth's freedom, fettering her down to his side like a dragon-fly on a pin, she can only flap her wings faintly and gasp in vain.

"Were you sorry to see me to-day?" asks Mr. Quinton, watching the firelight playing on Eleanor's figure.

"No, I was very miserable this afternoon; I had been crying. I like meeting you, it does me good."

As she speaks the electric light is turned up, and a little groan issues from Giddy.

"Just as we were all so comfortable in the gloaming!" pulling her hand from Bertie's with a pout.

"Butterflies should like light better than darkness," he drawls.

"I want to look round now," cries Eleanor, enthusiastically viewing the beautiful room. "Anyone could see that Giddy had something to do with this."

"Here is a pretty little writing-table behind a screen, with a rose-coloured lamp," says Carol. "When you are a member, Mrs. Roche, will you sometimes write to me?"

"What should I have to say?" she asks innocently, surprised at the suggestion.

"Tell me about yourself, if only in one line: 'I live—I breathe—I have my being.'"

"What an odd letter!"

"I like odd things, I like odd people; I hate conventionality, and scorn the commonplace. I know a girl who always speaks the truth, and everybody hates her. She glories in it."

"How splendid to be hated for such a cause!" declares Eleanor.

"She never will embrace a woman she dislikes, so many people think it is necessary, and the kiss of detestation is more fashionable in Society than that of real affection.

Google

The touch thrills her with bewildering emotion.

For myself, I think a kiss is overrated. It should be looked on in the light of a hand-shake—harmless and agreeable, a mark of courtesy, endearment, or respect."

"Then you would have to explain it," says Eleanor. "'I kiss you because I idolise you;' 'I kiss you because you are estimable;' 'I kiss you because you are rich and entertain me.' No, it would never answer."

She is fingering the delicate, scented writing paper.

"How nice this address is in gold, with a big butterfly in the corner. I have some invitations to answer, and I should like to do it here—it looks so well."

Eleanor seats herself, and draws the paper towards her. "Mrs. Roche regrets that owing to no previous engagement, she is unable to accept Mrs. B's dull invitation for Thursday!"

Carol laughs.

"Have you an 'At home' on Thursday week?"

"Yes, but I shall decline it."

"Don't," he whispers. "Accept—let them expect you—and fail to turn up. Come and meet me instead."

Eleanor trembles suddenly and grows pale. She feels herself face to face with temptation.

"No," she replies faintly. "But I shall be in, and if you call——"

"*If!* there is no 'if' in the matter. I would come every day if you let me."

"Every day!" Oh! how alluring it sounds.

She twists her wedding ring round and round, looking down on the carpet. She remembers the pattern that night in her dreams, a red Maltese cross on a blue ground. The blue and red swim before her eyes now like the colours in a kaleidoscope. A solitary tear rises in her left eye and falls on the blotter.

"If only I might do as I like!" she murmurs.

"'Might' is a word you could blot from your vocabulary. Why not?"

"Oh! don't—don't—don't," as he lays his hand on hers, and the touch thrills her with bewildering emotion.

"Where is Giddy? Oh! Giddy, take me home, it is nearly half-past five, and Philip will be back."

Mrs. Mounteagle raises her eyebrows at Eleanor's agitated tones.

"You told me he would be late this evening."

"Did I?" easing on her gloves.

Carol is standing behind with her cloak. His hands linger a moment as they fall on her shoulder, and he turns up the warm fur collar about her ears.

"My mite of a brougham only holds two," says Giddy, "and Bertie is coming with me, so I dare say Mr. Quinton will see you home in a hansom."

The suggestion amazes Eleanor. Really Giddy has the most delightful ideas, and as to Philip's prejudices—well her thoughts on this subject are better not divulged.

One moment she is a panic-stricken girl, afraid at the very word "flirtation," the next, inconsistent, susceptible, a slave to Giddy's whims, easily led, easily beguiled.

She can hear her heart beating, as Carol helps her into the hansom. It is dark already, dark as the unknown future, while they whirl away in the gloom.

"It is cold," says Eleanor.

He wraps her furs closer round her.

"*Cold?*" with a tender glance.

There is a volume in the word.

* * * *

Philip in the meanwhile is having tea with his cousin, Erminie Henderson.

She is a thoroughly staunch woman, with the warmest of hearts, sociable, bright, reliable, always ready with a helping hand where help is needed, yet human enough to err occasionally. Philip has known her from a child, has seen her weaknesses and excellences. The former overrule the latter. She is fond of him in a cousinly spirit, and delighted at his visit.

He . . . leans his head on his arms over the mantel-border.

For a long time they talk on ordinary subjects, till at last Erminie folds her arms, looks him searchingly up and down, and asks straight out:

"What's the matter, Phil?"

He starts, but returns her glance openly.

"To tell you the truth, I have come to confide in you—to ask you a favour."

"Good," replies Erminie, who has heard many a confidence in her day. "Go on."

"You know but little of my wife—she is young, quite a girl—very easily influenced."

His words come shortly. He breathes hard. "I would tell *you* what I could not say to any other creature. It is early days, and we have begun to quarrel. She has made great friends with a frivolous widow—a woman next door—whom I warned her against from the first.

"I have done all in my power to stop the intimacy, but protestations only appear to strengthen it. This woman has got Eleanor entirely under her thumb; she is like soft clay in her hands. I thought I could mould my wife, who was utterly uninformed, a little country farm girl. But Giddy Mounteagle has proved stronger, cleverer than I. Perhaps her method is easier to follow, perhaps I have misunderstood Eleanor from the first. Day by day she drifts farther from me, and yet *if* such a thing were possible, I love her more."

He rises and leans his head on his arms over the mantel-border.

"Help me, Erminie; you might do so much."

"How?"

"Come and stay with us—use *your* influence with Eleanor."

Miss Henderson seems confused.

"I should be delighted. I would do anything for you, but——"

Philip looks up quickly, his eyebrows rise involuntarily. He has never yet known a "but" from Erminie's lips, when asking her aid.

"The 'buts' of this world are its stumbling blocks."

"I am going to be married very shortly, I am in the midst of 'trosseauing.'"

"Ah! I had forgotten," he replies, smothering his disappointment.

Erminie makes a resolve.

"I'll come, Phil," she says, holding out her hand.

"But it will be so inconvenient!"

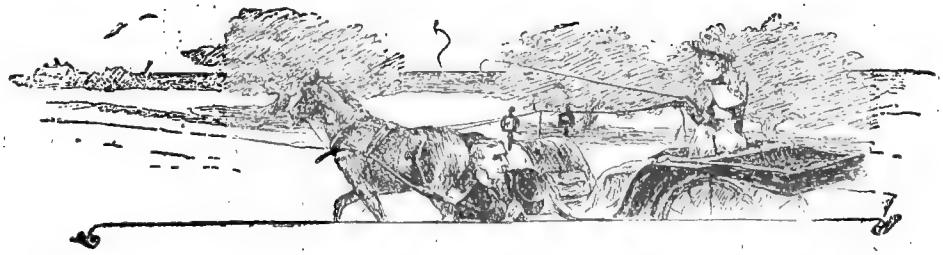
"Never mind. I shall interest Eleanor in my things, and try to win her from the widow. Erminie Henderson *versus* Giddy Mounteagle. What is the betting, Phil?"

He grasps her hands, and wrings them heartily.

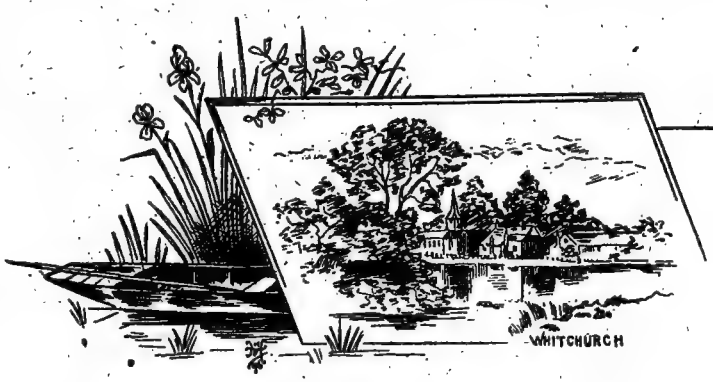
"You are the best little woman that ever lived!" he says. "You shall not be isolated from Nelson's society, for we will ask him, too. I suppose he can come?"

"What do *you* think?" cried Erminie, laughing.

(To be continued.)



Digitized by Google



A POINT OF HONOUR.

"EVERYTHING'S settled," said Clavignac cheerfully, entering the café where Fougeret, surrounded by the usual group of journalists and professional men who frequented the place, awaited his return, "pistols, twenty paces, firing to go on till a result is reached."

"Good!" said Fougeret calmly, "and the rendezvous?"

"Vezinet racecourse, ten a.m. Then on to Asnières. Order me a carriage for eight o'clock and be sure to have the same driver. He'll bring us luck."

"As you say."

"And do not forget the doctor. The pistols I'll attend to; I have a brand-new set and it's a fine chance to try them."

"I leave all to you."

And with a warm hand-clasp to Clavignac, Fougeret turned, nodded a hasty adieu to the rest of his friends, and left the room.

"A cool head, that Fougeret," admiringly remarked the sporting editor of a morning daily.

"Deuced cool!" came in a chorus from the group of men behind, as if, in some way, their comrade's courage reflected credit upon them.

"He ought to be cool, too," declared Clavignac, pouring himself out a glass of absinthe. "Fougeret is not a chicken at this business; his fourth affair, if I count right."

"So it is," responded the journalist respectfully. "He shall head the line in my forthcoming series of the noted duellists of Paris."

Meanwhile Fougeret had passed into the street. At the door of the café he had paused a moment as if to reflect; then, with a decided gesture, he started down the boulevard at a rapid rate. Presently he halted before the window of a big book shop filled with placards and gaily-bound volumes. Prominently displayed in the front row were a dozen or so dainty little pamphlets neatly stamped on the back: "Contes Roses, Armand Fougeret, Third Edition."

He opened the door, entered and passing between the long files of book-laden cases demanded of a clerk:

"M. Lavine—is he in?"

"In the office alone, sir."

Fougeret turned to the right and tapped at the door.

"Come in," responded a voice beyond.

Fougeret obeyed. The publisher, a man as young as himself nearly, with blonde beard and lively eyes, met him cheerfully.

"Come in, come in," said he, "glad to see you, too; 'Contes Roses' going splendidly. You saw them in the window. Third edition already. But what can I do for you to-day?"

"Can't you guess?" replied Fougeret, smiling in turn.

"Money? The deuce!" cried the publisher, his brow clouding visibly; "always money. You have already drawn in advance it seems to me."

"True, but I go out to-morrow, and it is necessary——"

"A duel!" broke in the other, "with St. Landry, of course, for his article on 'Contes Roses.' You are right, my friend, entirely right. The critique was in bad taste, and has affected our sales. Now, a duel as an offset will be an excellent advertisement, and, better still, will cost us nothing. Every paper in Paris will have the affair in full, and in giving the cause of the quarrel, will speak of the book. A capital, admirable idea. Ten louis will be enough?"

"Amply sufficient."

"There they are, then," said the publisher, piling ten pieces of gold before the author, while the clerk drew up a receipt.

"A thousand thanks," Fougeret answered as he gathered up the money.

"Not at all, not at all," said the other, carefully shutting the receipt in his desk. "Always ready to oblige you. I count on seeing you at the Varieties to-morrow night."

Fougeret took the hand extended to him and went out.

It was now five o'clock, and Fougeret took his way to the Madeleine, briskly keeping step to a lively opera air that he whistled between his teeth, till he reached the throng of public vehicles that crowd the streets of that quarter. Bearing in mind his friend's injunction touching the choice of a driver, he hunted up the wheeled mascot, instructed him to call for Clavignac at eight sharp the next morning, and then turned his steps towards the Saint Lazare station.

These preparatory details did not seem to disturb him at all; he knew them all. Every affair was the same, and as he walked along he ran over in his mind the duels that he had already been engaged in. The first was seven years back, at Savigny-sur-Orze, where he had made his journalistic *début* on a local paper. A follower of the Noirville candidacy, he had found himself arrayed in fierce opposition to the Legitimist organ in a controversy that wound up in the field. He was wounded, but Noirville was elected by a large majority.

The second occurred from a Bourse transaction, where he figured as Noirville's secretary, a connection that involved him in a dispute with a jealous colleague, who sought a quarrel and found a sword thrust. The third was not very long after the second, and close on

Digitized by Google

its heels came the ruin of his patron, Noirville, whose speculations terminated in a sudden collapse. With the great banker's fall went all the secretary's prospects, and Fougeret's little savings were also swallowed up in the general whirlpool.

Despondent at first, Fougeret rallied quickly, and sturdily set to work to recover lost ground. He had others to think of besides himself—his brave little wife, whom he had married in days of prosperity, and who had clung to him closer than ever in the hour of misfortune. The thought of her and his two little children stimulated his efforts and strengthened him in the struggle for existence.

Through his connection with Noirville, Fougeret knew a number of journalists, and through the kindness of one of them the doors of a review were opened to the young writer, whose contributions were received with marked approval by the literary world. His first novel achieved a brilliant success, and the comedy taken from it met an enthusiastic reception on its first performance at the "Odeon."

From that time on, his success was assured, and he, in consequence, began to acquire enemies. The present collection of some of his articles into a volume entitled "Contes Roses," had drawn from the pen of the cavilling St. Landry a critique so scathing, bitter, and unjust, that Fougeret, acting on his friends' advice, had sent his seconds to his jealous colleague.

And to-morrow he would be on the field as calm and careless as ever. What greater satisfaction could be given him? thought Fougeret, as he halted before his modest house and turned the key in the door.

"At last, Armand," said a soft voice coming from the kitchen; "I am so glad. Wait in the dining-room; dinner is ready."

He entered the room. The table was set with four plates, and looked so tempting and inviting that the young man gave a contented sigh. Then the door of the kitchen opened, revealing a dainty little woman, a trifle pale, with very blue eyes and very blonde hair, bearing a smoking tureen, followed by a four-year-old baby, who solemnly brought up the rear with the ladle.

"But how is this?" Armand inquired, seating himself and unrolling his napkin, after tenderly kissing his wife and children, "you are waiting on the table? Where is Rose?"

"Rose," replied the little woman, with a shade of embarrassment. "Rose is gone. I sent her away."

"Sent her away?" said Armand, surprised. "And why?"

"She was dishonest," responded Claudine. "I could not keep her. I paid her a week in advance and dismissed her. You owe your dinner to Georget and me."

"Yes," said Georget gravely, "it was us. Don't you like the soup, papa?"

"Delicious!" declared Armand; "you are famous cooks. But," dropping his voice a little, "where did you get the money, Claudine, to pay her?"

"I used what you gave me this week for the house. I knew that since your new book was nearly completed you could go to your publisher to-morrow morning and ask an advance."

Armand trembled.

"So you see," continued his wife, "we can get along nicely. I would rather wait, of course, till the novel is finished, but I do not think I am strong enough to go without eating till then. I have the will, but not the power, you know."

"And the money you shall have," broke in Armand hastily, "you will tire yourself out. I will have it—I will take it—two, or even three hundred francs, if you desire."

"That will be better," Claudine assented with a charming air of content, "because then I shall not have to part with my little piano. I did not intend you to know, but I found it a superfluous article of luxury, and they were coming to-morrow to take it away. Three hundred francs will get a nurse for the little one and many needed things besides."

"I see," said Armand with a sad smile, "that the money will not last long."

"But in three weeks' time your book will be finished and we shall be rich again. Then I can have a new dress. This has been made over so many times that there is scarcely enough left to hold the threads together."

"Yes," replied Armand, gazing consciously at the little threadbare gown, "I know—I know."

"And you need some new clothes, too, my dear; and a new dress for Georget. Why, we will spend at least fifteen hundred francs, my dear."

"Fifteen hundred francs," repeated Armand thoughtfully.

"Fully fifteen hundred. A tremendous sum for us at present, dear, but your novel will bring us at least three thousand, and to think that twenty days will see it finished!"

"Twenty days," echoed Armand, speaking like an automaton.

"Ah, how happy we shall be!" Claudine went on, her eyes sparkling at the prospect of the pleasure she saw in advance. "We can pass the summer at the seaside; Georget can have a little red cap, and we'll all enjoy ourselves as we did four years ago, when we were rich. How it all comes back to me, and with it all the other pleasures that I owe you. Kiss me, dearest!" and the loving little woman threw her arms about her husband's neck, who embraced her tenderly.

"But really," said Claudine, when she had disengaged herself from Armand's arms, "it is nine o'clock already. I must put baby to bed, lock up the house and see you settled at work before I go. Come!"

And taking the lamp she preceded her husband into the little library that adjoined the bedroom.

"There," said she, raising her lips for a parting kiss, "now work fast, get through, and remember that our happiness depends on these pages."

Left alone, Armand seized his pen but found it impossible to write a single line. Other thoughts which refused to be banished occupied his mind. His head on his hand, and staring vacantly into space, he remained in one position for two hours.

Presently a light tap sounded on the door.

"Armand," murmured the soft voice, "I am going to bed. Baby's asleep and everything's locked up safe and secure. Don't work too late—you should not weary yourself, deary."

The words recalled him to himself. He looked at the paper. It was blank.

"Come," muttered he, "this won't do. I must get to work!" and resolutely beginning he wrote on and on with feverish haste, filling five or six pages without raising his head. Suddenly he stopped. He had just written the words placed by himself in the mouth of one of his characters: "So be it; if a duel you are seeking a duel you shall have."

"A duel!" he cried, "why, I am going to fight a duel myself!"

Digitized by Google

And a vision of the morrow passed swiftly before his eyes—the open clearing, the group of seconds, two men dressed in black facing each other, pistols pointing at the grass awaiting the signal, while the sunbeams sifted through the trees and the birds sang joyously. But the scene changed suddenly. It was a man he saw now, pale and with closed eyes, lying on a litter, while one of the carriers stood knocking at a door—his door, as he recognised instantly. The woman who ran to meet the *cortège*—the trembling creature who, with a terrible cry, threw herself upon the body—he recognised her, too. It was Claudine!

Armand rose hastily and rapidly paced the room. The thing was true. To-morrow he was to fight. To-morrow, pistol in hand, he would be risking his own life to take another's.

His life! Great God! did it belong to him? Had he the right to dispose of it? Did he not owe it, as much as he owed money, to those who depended upon him? Were he dead, what would become of his wife and children, thrown helplessly on the mercy of his terrible creditors? He had no means. There wasn't as much as a hundred-franc note in the house. His sole dependence was his pen, his brain, and his talent. Where would they be to-morrow?

And his little wife, so frail, so delicate, what was in store for her? The hospital. And after that? His children, too. Georget, so bright, so happy, so intelligent; his little girl, his merry darling, what would become of her?

Fougeret continued to nervously pace up and down. The veins in his temple throbbed to bursting. He moistened a towel and bound it about his head. The cold water helped to cool his burning brain. Now he saw it all clearer. He had exaggerated the situation. A duel was not necessarily fatal. Had he not fought three already, and was not he still alive on the verge of a fourth?

Yes; but then he was alone in the world. His life was his own; he had a right to dispose of it as he pleased. He had no wife to leave behind, no children to leave fatherless, penniless, and helpless. And as these thoughts began again to whirl through his brain, he fancied that he could see the shining barrel of the pistol, with the little, round, dark hole aimed directly between his eyes.

He tried to shake off the feeling, to think of other things. It refused to vanish. He was responsible for those he loved. They lived through him, and they would perish without him. The ball that struck him would take more than one life. There would be three other victims, three to whom he owed love, happiness, and bread. Great God! How terrible it all was!

But another thought, equally cruel, tortured his soul—his honour.

He knew his comrades and the scoffing strollers of the boulevards. He heard their comments and their pitiless mockery. What were they saying? "A coward!" No! Impossible. Some of his comrades would surely defend him. Men were good at heart. Some one would be found that could understand.

"Armand," cried an anxious voice from an adjoining room, "is anything the matter, dear? You have been talking to yourself so loudly, so strangely, for more than an hour. Are you ill, dear?"

"No, no, little one!" returned he, going to the door. "No, do not worry. I—I am working."

"Dear, good boy!" murmured Claudine with a smile. Then, as the lids fell heavily over the sleepy eyes, she added softly, drowsily:

"Just think, Armand, what would become of us—if you were—to be ill—the babies and me. Good-night, dear."

And the loving wife resumed her interrupted dream.

At the other end of the room, tucked in her little crib, smiling and peaceful, her little hands clasped across her bosom, little Georget slept tranquilly.

A sudden storm of tears met Armand's cheeks. He rushed to his desk, caught up a sheet of paper, and wrote furiously.

* * * * *

At half-past ten next morning a man irreproachably clad in black stood on the Vezinet field holding out a letter with agitated air to another individual equally anxious and no less solemn.

"Is it possible?" cried the first.

"Simply incredible!" responded the second.

"He forgets himself and reflects upon us."

"Which shall not happen," cried both in a breath.

And with a grave air and measured steps the two men advanced towards the opposing group, who were viewing these proceedings with a puzzled air.

"Messieurs," said one of the two, speaking clearly in the midst of a general silence, "we regret to announce that our principal and former friend, M. Armand Fougeret, will not be on the field to-day. He declines to fight. It is needless to add," continued he, replacing the hat on his head with a sweeping gesture, "that we are entirely at your service—in M. Fougeret's place."

Le Vier.

Google

In the summer of 18?4 I was living in the city of New York, and occupied the position of foreign editor on one of the leading journals.

A journalist who does his work thoroughly has little time for amusement, and, after a while, even loses his taste for it. I had one relaxation only, but that was a great one—music. I was passionately devoted to opera—never missed a first night, and on one of those occasions began the singular series of events related in this brief narrative.

I was seated in the stalls waiting for the rising of the curtain, when I observed two persons enter one of the proscenium boxes—a middle-aged man and a young lady. I was certain I had seen the former somewhere. He was low of stature, had a commanding forehead, and wore a heavily-matted beard, already grizzled, which descended nearly to his breast. The young lady was a beautiful blonde, but her face was entirely unfamiliar to me, while I had certainly met her escort before. Where had I seen him?

I was still looking curiously at the pair when a third person entered the box, and I recognised a well-known officer of the detective force. He approached the young lady's escort, leaned forward, and said a few words to him. His head turned quickly and I could see his eyes flash, but he rose and accompanied the officer to the rear of the box, where they remained some moments in conversation. He then returned, said something to the young lady, and they disappeared from the box.

The whole affair was perfectly plain. The stranger had been arrested, but so quietly that it had attracted no attention and after speculating idly upon this rather singular incident, I dismissed it from my mind as of no personal interest to me.

I returned from the opera about midnight, and was about to begin my night's work, when a messenger brought me a note. It was dated from a well-known hotel on Fifth Avenue, and contained these words:

Dear Friend Hartley,—I am sorry to inconvenience you at so late an hour, but I need a friend to vouch for my character, and found your name in the directory. Your police have arrested me for theft, and my daughter is much disturbed.

Your Friend,
Magnus (of Switzerland).

Magnus of Switzerland! So the stranger was my old travelling companion in the Oberland—Dr. Magnus. He was much changed, but I certainly ought to have known him. I had made his acquaintance about ten years before in the Alps, where he was exploring the glaciers, and from the first he had impressed me as a remarkable person. I knew little of him. From chance speeches I supposed him to be a native of Saxony; that he had graduated as a Doctor of something at Gottingen, and had lived in France and England, as he spoke both languages almost without accent. Long association had produced a warm friendship between us, but when I had parted with him I had never expected to see him again, and now here he was in New York indicted on a charge of felony.

A cab was waiting at the door, and I was driven to the hotel, where I found Dr. Magnus in a private room, with the police officer seated opposite him.

He rose, and we exchanged a warm grasp of the hand.

"My dear Magnus," I exclaimed, laughing, "what brought you to the States, and what on earth tempted you to commit a felony?"

A slow smile came to his face, and he replied, with his slight foreign accent:

"I confess appearances are against me. It seems a lady in this hotel has been robbed of some diamonds—she occupied the room next to my own—and, as I took some stones to a jeweller to be set yesterday, I am arrested as the criminal."

I was delighted to meet Dr. Magnus again, and felt in a jesting humour.

"You took diamonds to a jeweller to have them set? That is a suspicious circumstance," I said.

"It seems so," he replied. "I was not pleased with the styles shown me, and my friend, the jeweller, was offended, I think. He probably saw a notice of the robbery, and this has led to my arrest."

"Oh, but you have only to call on the lady to describe her diamonds, and then produce yours. I will remain with you, and in the morning we will clear up the whole affair."

As the police officer was a personal acquaintance of mine, matters were soon arranged. I gave him my word that Dr. Magnus would appear to answer the charges against him, and the officer then retired with a polite bow.

Digitized by Google

He had scarcely disappeared when Dr. Magnus rose and going to the door of the drawing-room, called:

"Frederica."

The door opened quickly, and the young lady whom I had seen with him at the opera came into the apartment. Her beauty, as I then got a good view of her, quite dazzled me. She was tall, apparently twenty, and had brown hair worn low on the forehead; large blue eyes, and an expression of such exquisite sweetness and modesty that it afterwards haunted me.

"My dear," said Dr. Magnus, "this is my friend Hartley whom I have spoken of so often. The friend of the father ought not to be a stranger to the daughter."

The young lady held out her hand with a shy smile, and then looked anxiously at her father.

"Don't fear, there will be no further trouble," said Dr. Magnus, in reply to the look, "and now, my dear, go and get some rest; all this excitement is bad for you."

An expression of relief came to her face, and, kissing her father on the forehead, she bowed to me, and returned to her chamber.

Dr. Magnus resumed his seat, and, without waiting for my questions, briefly explained his presence in the City. His wife, a native of England, had died soon after his visit to Switzerland, leaving an only daughter, and, as the child's health was delicate, he had taken her to Teneriffe for the benefit of the mild climate. It had proved, however, too enervating, and, hearing the air and mineral springs of Virginia recommended, he had come to America and taken up his residence in south-western Virginia, where his daughter's health had become completely restored. He was now returning after a summer excursion through Canada, by way of Niagara.

Upon my expressing a wish to see the diamonds, he produced the case, and showed me the jewels, which were in the form of octahedron, and quite dazzled me.

"These strike me as rather uncommon," I said.

"They are very uncommon."

"They are probably heirlooms, or did you purchase them?"

"Neither," said Dr. Magnus briefly. "I manufactured them myself. They are crystallized carbon, and they have stood every test as pure diamonds. They retain the shape of crystallization, as all diamonds would, if not subjected to attrition."

"And they are worth——"

"One hundred thousand pounds, I suppose," said Dr. Magnus, laying the case on the table.

"Well," I said, with a feeling of amazement, "your discovery is certainly wonderful."

"I have made others far more important—one especially, but I dislike to speak of it."

"Dislike to speak of it?"

"It is extremely deadly, and perhaps it is my duty to bury it in my own breast. But men are certain to make bad use of it; but, after all, that is not my concern. The student's duty is to extend the limits of knowledge——"

A knock at the door interrupted the speaker, and the police officer came in, bowing and smiling. He had come, he said, to make Dr. Magnus an apology. The stolen diamonds had been found on the person of the lady's maid, and he returned expressing regrets.

As it was now daylight, I took my leave, promising to call again when my friend had taken some rest. When I returned, he had driven out, and I only saw him again for a moment as he was leaving the city.

"Come and see me," he said; "it would be a great pleasure. Stay—I will trace you a *carte de la route*."

He turned his head quickly, and I could see his eyes flash.

And he wrote some words on a card.

"We can then return to the subject we were discussing when we were interrupted," he said.

"I will certainly make you a visit as soon as possible," I replied.

And exchanging a warm pressure of the hand with Dr. Magnus and the beautiful Frederica, I took leave of them.

* * * * *

These things took place in August. About the middle of September I was set down by the railway train at a little wayside station in one of the wildest parts of south-western Virginia.

I had come to make my promised visit to Dr. Magnus, and was impelled by two motives—love and curiosity.

Digitized by Google

To come to the point in a few words, I was very much in love with Frederica. I was thirty-three, and had never seriously loved a woman, and now what romance writers called my fate, had come in a single moment. The blue eyes haunted me, and the shy smile of the exquisite lips followed me everywhere. One of the most remarkable of all human events had occurred. A man had met a woman, passed a few moments with her, and she had become all the world to him.

He had grown taciturn and absent-minded.

I need not say that I had an additional motive for my visit—to ascertain the nature of that deadly discovery to which Dr. Magnus had alluded. Upon arriving at his house I saw Frederica waiting to receive me. She seemed a thousand times more beautiful than when I had seen her in New York, and held out her hand with the old, shy smile. It was only when she coloured slightly that I became aware of a simple circumstance—that I was looking at her in silence, and still held her hand.

Dr. Magnus, who had been away, returned in the evening, greeted me as cordially as I could wish, and then began the most delightful month of my life. The days passed like a dream. I hunted in the mountains, fished in the river, passed hours in my host's library—full of rare and curious volumes—and took long rides on horseback with Frederica. Of these rides I will not speak—the subject would carry me much too far. Let me come to another—a long interview which I held with Dr. Magnus, and what followed it.

I had seen little of my host since the first few days of my visit. He seemed to be absorbed in some mysterious occupation, and I had found it impossible to renew the conversation broken off in New York in reference to his great discovery. He had grown taciturn and absent-minded; regularly retired after breakfast to his laboratory, and, though he had conducted me to it at once on the day after my arrival, he had revealed none of its secrets to me. I saw only a large apartment filled with machinery, crucibles, retorts, and the usual appliances of an experimental chemist. He always kept the key of the room, which no one entered unless accompanied by him; but the reason of this precaution was unexplained to me, and I could only guess at it.

At last an ardent curiosity got the better of me and I said to him one morning:

"Do you remember what you spoke of in New York—your important discovery? You did not promise to tell me your secret, but, to be frank, I would like very much to hear about it."

He looked at me absently, and said:

"My discovery? Yes, I remember, and I am about to test it. Come to the laboratory to-night and we will speak of it."

* * * * *

At a late hour on the same night I was seated with Dr. Magnus in his laboratory. He seemed greatly depressed. The habitual expression of his face was one of philosophic calmness. Now something evidently troubled him, and he was ill at ease.

"You are unwell," I said: "you have lost all your cheerfulness at least. What is the matter, friend?"

He looked at me with a vague expression, hesitated, and then replied:

"I am not unwell. The trouble you notice is occasioned by a presentiment."

"A presentiment?"

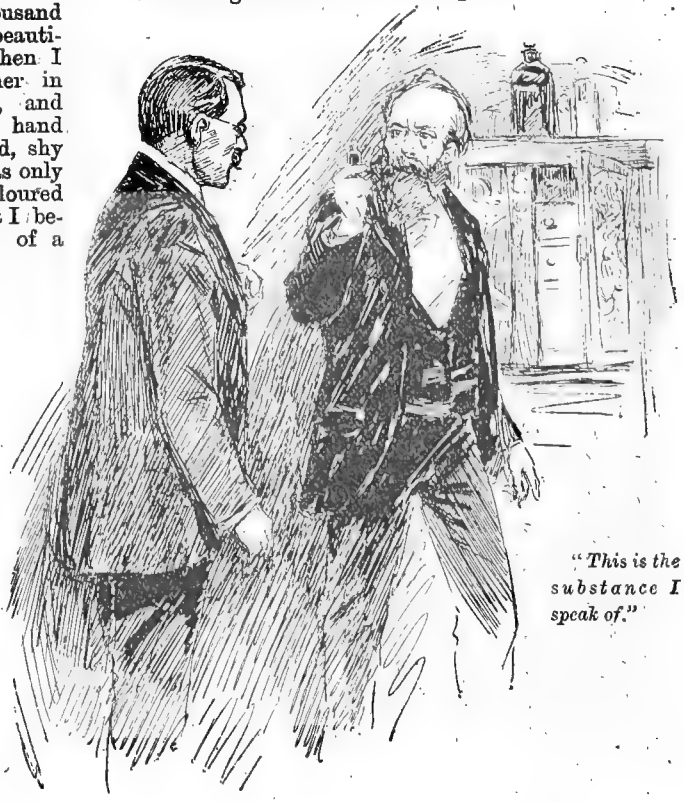
"What day of the month is it?" he asked.

"The 11th," I said with surprise.

"Well, the 13th of October will be a bad day for me."

"A bad day?"

"Something sinister will occur upon it."



"This is the substance I speak of."

Digitized by Google

I looked at him with the utmost astonishment.

"You are surprised?"

He spoke in the calmest tone, and was evidently convinced of what he said. What was I to reply? That he was a mere visionary? That seemed unnecessary, and I changed the conversation. I spoke of the discovery he alluded to when we conversed in New York.

"It is simple, as all wonderful things are," he said. "I have discovered—almost by accident—a combination of the simplest substances which produce an element of destruction of the most fearful character."

Doctor Magnus rose, went to the cabinet, and, opening the door with a key which he kept upon his person, brought back a vial containing less than an ounce of what appeared to be a white powder.

"This is the substance I speak of—no, it would be better not to intrust it to you, though, so far as I am aware, there would be no danger from the concussion if you were to let the vial fall. All the properties of the substance are not known to me, however."

"Then your discovery is an explosive."

"Yes—but one of such enormous power that all others are nothing in comparison with it."

And, hastily restoring the vial to the cabinet, he led the way out of the laboratory, up a flight of stairs to the observatory, on the summit of the house.

Dr. Magnus looked at his watch.

"In two minutes you will see something," he said.

"Something?"

"Do you remember that I was absent yesterday?"

"Yes."

"Well, I had ridden into the mountain and descended into a cavern yonder beneath that peak. In one minute the mountain will be torn to pieces."

As he spoke an immense column of flame rose from the summit of the mountain, and a roar like thunder rolled through the gorges.

"What does this mean?" I exclaimed.

"I mean that an ounce of white powder buried a thousand feet, and, connected with an electric clock, has lifted a million cubic yards of earth and granite."

He spoke quietly, but added suddenly in a low and awe-struck tone:

"Do you see?"

"See what?"

"The smoke! the smoke! It is like a girl kneeling and praying!"

I looked, and must say that what I saw excited my astonishment. The white smoke from the explosion has risen to an immense height, and has assumed the exact form of a girl upon her knees, looking up with clasped hands, and apparently praying.

"It is like Frederica," whispered Dr. Magnus.

* * * * *

The next day was the 12th of October, and I shall always remember it and the day that followed.

In company with Dr. Magnus I rode to the scene of explosion. The mountain was torn asunder from base to summit, and was an immense ruin. It was no longer possible to doubt the fearful character of his discovery.

An hour afterwards I was walking with Frederica.

We rode slowly back, and I recall the solemn and mournful tones of his voice.

"These terrible forces of Nature," he said, "profoundly sadden me, for I feel my insignificance. What is the poor pigmy man in presence of them? They sport with him."

"Your pigmy is the master, since he controls them," I replied.

"And the Providence you talk of is the master of both, I suppose," replied Dr. Magnus.

He spoke in a gloomy tone, and added:

"I have tried to believe in your Providence and cannot."

"And yet you believe in astrology—in signs in the heavens—why not in that behind them?"

"Signs in the heavens," he repeated in a low voice. "Did you observe that cloud of smoke last night."

"In the shape of a woman praying? Yes, and it certainly was remarkable."

"But the resemblance."

We looked at the end of the avenue leading to the house.

"Look," he said, touching my arm and speaking almost in a whisper.

I looked, and I confess I was startled. What I saw was the figure of Frederica, clad in a white dress, and kneeling on the grass. She had gathered some wild flowers, and as she knelt, holding up both hands and arranging the flowers, her figure exactly resembled the

Digitized by Google

strange shape assumed by the smoke, to which Dr. Magnus had called my attention on the preceding night.

An hour afterwards I was walking with Frederica on the banks of the island, and this long interview changed the whole aspect of my life.

I knew what I had not dared to hope—that the beautiful girl returned my own affection; that she had seen how much I loved her, and had gradually come to love me in return: and at twilight, when we went back slowly, I held clasped in my own hand the hand of the woman who had promised that she would be my wife.

Frederica had made but one request—that I would defer my interview with her father. He was subject to fits of melancholy, and of late had been very much depressed. Would I please not speak to him of our engagement, at least not during the next day? She had a reason for this request which she would afterwards explain to me.

Her words had produced a singular impression on me. Did she share her father's belief that something would occur on the 13th of October? I dared not ask her, and simply said that I would obey her wishes.

I passed the evening with Frederica in the drawing-room, and she retired about eleven. I then went into the library, and found Dr. Magnus engaged in writing.

As I entered he turned his head, and I said:

"I am afraid I disturb you."

"Not at all; I am only writing my will," he replied.

"Your will?"

"To-morrow is the 13th of October, and, as something may happen, I am preparing for it."

With these words he went on writing, and I soon afterwards left him.

* * * * *

The morning of the 13th of October duly came, and I am obliged to confess, in spite of my profound incredulity, I experienced a vague emotion. There is something in earnest conviction which affects the most sceptical; and, though I felt that the apprehensions of Dr. Magnus were visionary, his words had left on me an indefinable impression of uneasiness.

It seemed absurd, however, to connect anything sinister with such a day. The sun had risen without a cloud, and all around was bright and cheerful. The sky was blue, and the robins were chirping; a light breeze laughed in the leaves.

Dr. Magnus retained his depression, though I could see that he made a resolute effort to conceal it from Frederica. In this he appeared to have succeeded. She was radiant, and after breakfast said that she had planned a little excursion. Would we accompany her?—she would promise to make herself agreeable.

"Let us wait," cried Frederica, throwing her arms round him.

I looked at her smiling face, and felt that under her gaiety there was some earnest purpose. What it was I was unable to divine, but I found it impossible to rid myself of the impression.

Dr. Magnus at first demurred to joining the proposed excursion — he would be occupied all the day, he said, in his laboratory. But Frederica renewed her entreaties—declared that the day was much too beautiful to be passed in the house—and the result was that he consented to accompany us.

An hour afterwards the carriage appeared; we entered, and crossed the ford; and then the driver, by direction of Frederica, proceeded due west towards the mountains.

I recall every trifle connected with this day, and especially the exhibition of nervous terror on the part of Dr. Magnus. In a man of his resolute character, his proceedings were unaccountable. He kept his eyes fixed upon Frederica, and seemed to find in every trifle something disquieting.

An hour's drive through a lovely country brought us to a point where the road ascended the mountain, and the carriage proceeded slowly up the steep acclivity. At last it entered a body of pines, emerging from them a few minutes afterwards, and I saw before me what took me suddenly back to Switzerland.

It was a little Swiss *chalet* perched upon a shoulder of the mountain and commanding a view of the entire country for many miles. A winding path led to the door, and we ascended it and entered the chalet. Here a new surprise awaited me.

The interior of the rough building was the picture of elegance. The cottage furniture was in exquisite taste, bright rugs lay on the polished floors, wicker chairs held out arms of welcome, and we were met by the

Digitized by Google

smiling faces of the servants from the island, sent in advance by Frederica to prepare for our reception.

A few words explained this marvel. Dr. Magnus had purchased an estate on the slope of the mountain for grazing cattle, and built the chalet as a souvenir of his travels in Switzerland. He had intended it for his herdsman, but Frederica had taken a fancy to it, had proceeded to furnish it as a summer villa, and had ended by declaring that the air of the mountain was far better for her than the humid atmosphere of the island.

As the hours passed on, the laughter of Frederica gradually dissipated my impressions of the morning, and I think they would have disappeared but for a circumstance for which I could not account. Looking attentively at her, I became convinced that her gaiety was assumed. She was evidently acting a part, and seemed to be straining every nerve to retain her father at the *châlet* until night.

Dr. Magnus was gloomy and agitated. Sunset was near now, but the sun was obscured, and he could only tell the time by his watch, at which he repeatedly looked. A storm was coming, and if we proposed to return it was plainly time to do so. An immense black pall swept over the mountains, extending above the amphitheatre, and flashes of lightning, followed by sullen thunder, lit up the wild landscape.

What followed will never be effaced from my memory.

We were standing at the door of the *châlet*, watching the storm, which was sweeping eastward, when a small clock on the wall of the sitting-room struck the hour.

"The danger is over. Let us return," Dr. Magnus suddenly exclaimed.

"Oh, no, let us wait," cried Frederica, throwing her arms round him.

"But there is no one at the island."

"Oh, I beg of you."

And, falling upon her knees, Frederica sobbed and clasped her hands. For the second time I saw the resemblance to the figure in the smoke.

"The day has ended. There is no more danger," cried Dr. Magnus, clasping her in his arms.

"The clock is too fast," I heard Frederica whisper.

As she spoke a sudden glare reddened the sky, and the ground shook. A roar came from the direction of the island, and I saw what I shall never forget. A flash of lightning had struck the house—no doubt ignited the substance in the cabinet—and the great mansion resembled the crater of a raging volcano.

The 13th of October had had its sinister event after all, and the great discovery had wreaked its vengence on its author.

J. E. COOKE.

A LOVER'S LETTERS.

Translated from the Dutch of "Holda."

THERE lay the letters on the table in front of her—love letters, each of which had made her heart leap with joy when she had received it. Many times since that day when he had passed out of her life she had taken the packet out of the drawer, intending to read them through for the last time and then destroy them as she had destroyed or removed everything else which could remind her of her folly.

But each time her heart had failed her at the sight of the familiar handwriting, and, with scalding tears trickling down her cheeks, she had thrust the packet back into the drawer. Oh, the misery of it! Why had she trifled with the man she had loved? *Had* loved? Nay, the man she loved still, passionately, but who was lost to her for ever.

But she had done it at last; she had read them, in consecutive order, from date to signature. The first—how well she remembered it—written in a shaky hand, indicative of deep emotion, was a frank but timid declaration of love; the last, a bitterly formal letter of farewell.

The task was over; a task which had caused her the sharpest pain mingled with that strange sensation of pleasure which we all experience in recalling the past with its sorrows and joys. It only remained to destroy them and turn her back resolutely on all that had gone before. She gave one last look at the small heap of paper and then took it up in both hands and dropped it on the fire.

She watched the tongues of flame slowly wind round and among the paper, destroying for ever the words of love which a man had poured out from the depths of his soul. How slowly they burned! She took up the poker and stirred them, and as the flames leapt up it was as though a knife had pierced her heart. The sheets of paper crackled, and curled up like human beings in agony; and as she stared at them with fixed gaze, she could now and then see some loving word which *he* had written.

Oh, God! It was too hard to bear! Would they never burn? With a low laugh that had no sense in it, she again thrust the paper between the bars.

Up leapt the flames, swallowing the letters that had brought such joy to her and had been kissed again and again. She could not bear it. A cry of pain, a moan rather, such as makes one fear for the mental equilibrium of the being who utters it, came from her as she sank upon a chair.

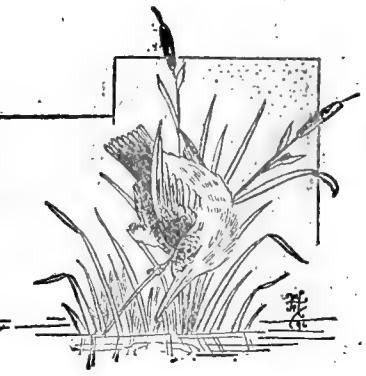
At last it was finished. She stood up, trembling, with a feeling at her heart as though she had crushed the life out of a human creature. As she turned, her eyes fell upon a charred piece of paper which had been jerked out of the grate when she had plunged the poker into the burning mass. Scarcely knowing what she did, she picked it up and read these words:

"My own darling."

She let it drop, pressed both hands to her heart, and fell to the ground unconscious.

Digitized by Google

THE BUNCH OF VIOLETS.



Above the din of conflicting voices, sharp, insistent—for the discussion between these men, perfunctory at first, had grown passionate and acrid—Ayessa's voice broke at last like a bell:

"You talk and talk—of love! How you talk of it! In every key, on every note; and yet not one of you—not one—knows what love is."

She lay, half-reclining, on the cushioned divan, like a Sultana among her slaves. And she was, as some Sultana, powerful. All the great city that year crouched at her feet. That arched gipsy foot of hers was on its neck.

Royalty sat in the great box, with the crimson and gold draperies, night upon night. Reared in a strolling player's tent—born no one knew where—perhaps in purple and fine linen—who might tell?—perhaps in rags—this breaker of wild horses, this bareback circus rider, wielded a might in this hour of her triumphs as ever jewelled sceptre did.

As a chorus of voices protested she rose, suddenly shaking off her languor, beginning to pace the floor, half-oblivious of them all, her long interlaced fingers quivering a little, her great eyes darting jets of sombre fire, an ironical smile just touching the curves of her disdainful lips.

"I speak what I know," she continued. "I speak the truth. How many of you here profess to love me? Profess to be consumed with passion so great that all the waters of the Polar Seas could not quench their flame?" Her glance swept faces blushing, and faces pale with emotion, and the smile on her lips deepened. "Who would answer?" she cried, "if I asked which of you all would be ready to die for me to-night?"

There were men of all ages in that room, men of all temperaments. Yet all answered "I." But the smile on the lips of the girl deepened the more.

Every man had answered but one. That one remained silent. But when the others had gone, he still lingered.

"And so, Decroix," said Ayessa, and her teeth gleamed like pearls in the ripe pomegranate bloom of her mouth, "you would not be ready to die for me to-night?"

When Decroix answered, his voice was hoarse and muffled, a dangerous look was in his eyes.

"Did you suppose I would join the chorus of all these fools and knaves? Do you count upon throwing me in with the mass of your adorers—the crowd that philanders about your footsteps day and night? I did not reply to your challenge—no! But if you ask me whether I would die for you to-night——"

The sentence broke unfinished between his teeth. He touched with trembling fingers the yellow-coloured rose languishing on her breast.

"Throw that into a pit of fire, and ask me to bring it up from the depths again!"

She took the rose from her breast and let it drop at her feet. She turned from him and laughed a little. She stood opposite a long mirror, and in it she saw a reflection of herself.

"See!" She crossed her arms and from under her lowered brows her great eyes fastened themselves on the reflected image. "That is what you love with so mad a passion. You, in one degree; all those other men in a hundred others. These eyes, these hands, these lips, this throat. This skin, because it is softer than that of some other woman; this hair, because it is longer, silkier, more abundant. Let us lose all this to-morrow, and where would your vaunted admiration be? Do you love the soul beneath all this?"

Her voice had changed to a new key. There had come a strange tremour to the full lips:

"Do you care for the immortal spirit that gives life, breath to all this clay, whose chance perfection so influences your imagination?" She broke into a shrill little laugh. "But perhaps you think that a gipsy circus rider, a girl who shows herself in silk tights every night on a bareback Arab horse can have no immortal soul?"

Decroix stood frowning, gazing at her half bewildered, gnawing his moustache.

"You try me far," he muttered. "If you were transformed, through some fatal blight, into a thing hideous—to-morrow—this very night—still I should love you!"

But Ayessa looked at him and smiled.

"No, you would not," she said softly. "You would not, my friend. You think so, perhaps. But you would not."

"I swear to you——"

But already his insistence had begun to gall upon her. She turned, with a faint line of fatigue on her lips, and murmured:

"Useless. All you could say would not change my conviction. It is instinctive, and instinct never leads astray."

Over the fire of the Eastern face a veil of thought had dropped that night. The eyes were shadowed, introspective. Scarcely a ripple softened the set, disdainful expression of the mouth under the wild plaudits of the great ring. And Ayessa rode as she had never ridden before—with a dash that was almost reck-

Digitized by Google

less, with an abandon that was almost desperate, with a well-nigh insolent disregard of consequences. The boxes rose at her. The plaudits turned into long shouts of mad approval. Such feats as no woman had ever performed before Ayessa performed that night, as in a half-conscious state, easily, carelessly, as a child tosses an iridescent soap-bubble into the air.

Panting a little she stood now in the sawdust pathway that led from the ring to her dressing-room. The black Arab horse had been led slowly past her by a supernumerary; another man followed, carrying the flowers, the baskets, the crowns.

"Ah, you Decroix?" said Ayessa indifferently, her glance resting on the young man who had made his way in. He stood near her dressing-room door, devouring her with his sullen eyes.

"You know that it is against the rules for you to be here?" she pursued, shrugging her shoulders. She was about to pass him without another word. But her glance beyond him had discerned another face. A face pale, a little emaciated, with deep-set eyes, which she had seen many times before, but only recently had begun to observe.

This man did not belong to her train. He was a young poet and journalist, poor, struggling; an enthusiast aflame with those dreams that visit chosen souls in the first wildly sweet years of youth alone, with no fortune but his genius, such as he had, nothing to offer the beautiful gipsy, to Ayessa, the unknown Bohemian circus-rider, who reigned like a queen and wore jewels that would have ransomed a crown.

But now their eyes met, and Ayessa paused. In the young man's fingers drooped a little knot of purple violets.

"For me?" she said softly, and she extended her hand. The tips of those velvet fingers touched his for an instant, and a quiver ran like flame through his veins. His pale cheek grew a little paler, and Ayessa smiled. The crowns, the great clusters of rare exotics lay tossed in careless heaps, unglanced at, in her dressing-room, but when Ayessa came out into the sawdust ring again the little bunch of purple violets drooped against her heart.

Why had she placed it there? She could scarce herself have told, perhaps.

This man had never sought to approach her. He had always stood afar, on the outskirts of the retinue of men of fashion that surrounded her. Only a swift, intenser pallor where her glance had intercepted his had told his secret. Or had there been no secret to tell?

Breathless the row upon row of intent faces watched the last feats of the bareback rider for that night. The most wonderful had been reserved for that moment. And Ayessa rode again as she had ridden all that evening—as if half-unconscious of herself, of the hundreds of spectators, the almost superhuman difficulty, involving intense physical fatigue in every movement. Even the black Arab horse appeared, magnetically, to have caught some of this spirit. The people rose in their seats and cheered wildly. Then through the cheers there broke suddenly the frightened cry of a woman.

How had it happened? No one exactly knew. A hair's-breadth swerving of the horse, an infinitesimal deviation on the part of the rider, an instant's loss of balance, and Ayessa lay prone in the sawdust. It was all over in a moment. They gathered up the unconscious form. The Arab horse had stopped, quivering in every limb. They bore Ayessa swiftly out of sight, and six Japanese trapeze performers hurried in to take her place.

The evening's programme went on to its close. The excitement in the audience subsided. The idol of the hour was not forgotten; but there was a belief that she could have sustained no serious injury. A slight shock, a few moments of unconsciousness, and to-morrow night she would delight their eyes again as before.

But those who left the great building by the players' exit an hour later knew otherwise; knew that never again would Ayessa hold hundreds of eyes spellbound upon her every motion; that never again would she be the power, the fever, the queen that she had been. In a moment, in the drawing of a breath, she had been hurled from the highest pinnacle of her triumph into the shadows of a blasted life.

"For," said one of her obscurer companions of the ring as she hurried home with her lover, a juggler with knives, "what'll Ayessa ever be good for now, with one arm broken and one ankle so shattered that both those doctors they called in said she must have a limp for life. Beside, that cut across her cheek from the horse's hoof will leave a scar that'll disfigure her till the day of her death. So good-bye to all this famous beauty!" And the girl laughed a little.

She was not more ill-natured than many another of her kind. But she had some share of comeliness herself, and where Ayessa was no other beauty had ever been remarked.

* * * * *

On the outskirts of the great city stand some scattered rows of white cottages framed in verdure. No echoes from the clamour of the paved streets reaches this retreat. The restless fever of the city's life dies out in quietude.

From out of the door of one of these cottages a young man has just come, walking slowly with head sunk a little, gnawing his moustache, so lost in thought that he passes without seeing or recognising him, another man just about to enter. But the latter has both seen and recognised Decroix.

A moment later he stands in the darkened room, where, on a low lounge, lies Ayessa.

"Decroix has just been here."

Ayessa slowly raises her eyes, and through the gloom, his own eyes becoming accustomed to the muffled light after the glare of outside, the new-comer sees her smile.

"Yes. He thought he really loved me, poor fellow—loved me in spite of all the accounts of my disfigurement. But I knew better. And when he insisted on coming here I raised the curtain from that window. Then he realised the change. I am not a monster, after all, but I am no longer the beautiful Ayessa! And Decroix—Decroix, after a few stammered phrases—left me."

She speaks calmly, softly, still with the inscrutable smile on her lips.

But the man before her watches her with unwavering eyes. He is very pale. Suddenly he takes his hand from his breast. In his fingers is a little bunch of violets.

"Once before I offered you violets and you wore them on your heart. Will you take these now, and with them my life?"

Slowly her hand is outstretched for the odorous blossoms. Her steady glance questions his. He slowly bends his knee.

"Whatever other men have done, I have loved you!" he says.

She looks an instant into his impassioned poet's eyes.

"I know it. I think I knew it from the first," she softly murmurs in reply. F. R. Rogers.

Digitized by Google

WAS IT FATAL?

I was on a visit for a few days to a married schoolmate. This, my first evening there, was stiflingly hot and I slipped out for a breath of air, leaving my friend busy with some housewifely duty.

I went as far as the gate and leant over it, musing on the difference between her life, so full of loving interests, and my, as yet, solitary one. As I meditated, half enviously, a flash of lightning, harbinger of the much needed shower, brightened the road before me and illumined the path, dark with overhanging trees, on the opposite side. It disclosed to my view the slouching form of a man slowly moving along and with his face turned directly towards me. I shivered slightly with fear—yes, it was fear, though I was ashamed of it a moment afterwards. A man returning from work, I thought; and yet, why did he not look straight ahead instead of towards this house, unless he was attracted by the cheerfully lighted windows?

I felt strangely uneasy and peered into the darkness, vainly endeavouring to see if he were still there. No more friendly flashes came, and as the rain began to patter down, I was fain to return unsatisfied to the house.

Why was I suspicious?

I did not know. It was not that the man's face frightened me, for the glimpse had been so momentary that if the countenance were evil, or that of the most benign philanthropist, I could not tell.

I wanted to ask my friend if there had been any burglaries in the village of late; but I feared to needlessly alarm her, and so refrained from mentioning the incident; but while I conversed on ordinary topics, the form of that man persistently recurred to my mental vision.

I did so far forget my intention as to say to Mr. Adams, my friend's husband: "Have you any firearms in the house?" To which he replied that he always kept a revolver under his pillow. "A very excellent precaution," I exclaimed with relief. And the matter dropped; but afterwards the thought came to my mind that while the revolver might be a good means of defence to him and his wife upstairs, it would scarcely benefit me, who slept in the little spare room downstairs.

The windows of this room, I tremblingly remembered, were easily accessible from the piazza which extended round that side of the house, and the fastenings on the shutters and sashes were very frail little arrangements. I did not believe in presentiments, but wondered how and why this burglar question, a thing which had never troubled me before, should haunt me so.

Still pondering the matter, I followed my friend into the kitchen, where she wanted to get a pitcher of water. On the table lay a knife that had been worn and ground away till the top was a sharp point. She often used it for peeling vegetables, and that it had a keen edge I knew, for I had helped her that day.

As she turned for the water I quickly picked up the knife, and slipped it up my sleeve, urged to do so by the instinct of self-defence, not of any kleptomaniacal tendencies.

I flushed guiltily when my friend faced me, for I was unaccustomed to any underhand or undersleeve movements, and fancied she must know I had done something sly. However, she did not suspect anything, and a few minutes after went as far as the door of my room with me, kissed me good-night and retired.

Under my pillow I slipped the knife I meant should act as my protector. Then, smiling at my cowardice, I dismissed the subject from my mind, leisurely undressed, and was soon fast asleep.

How long I slept I do not know, but a ray of light fell across my eyelids, and in an instant I was wide awake. I did not move a muscle, but all my previous fears rushed across me.

The light from a burglar's lantern, reasoned my fright. A faint flash of lightning, whispered my cooler sense. Nervously alert, I listened. A slight rustling and rattling fell on my ear. Someone was at the window near the head of my bed, of that I was certain. Without moving my head, I turned my eyes round till I got a view of the window, then saw, with horror, that it was

Digitized by Google

being slowly raised. By some diabolical means, the fellow must have broken or loosened the fastenings.

I was frozen with terror. In a few seconds the opening would be wide enough to admit the ruffian. I dare not scream; for before help could come, even supposing that my cry should awaken those above me, the brute would have time to silence me, perhaps for ever.

Then I remembered the knife. A ray of hope filled my terrified heart.

I slipped my hand, oh, so stealthily and silently under my pillow, at the same time trying to maintain a regular breathing to indicate slumber.

Never did soldier clap his hand on his faithful sword with more implicit trust than I did the little bone handle of my humble blade.

None too soon did I grasp the weapon, for now appeared a big head covered with a thick shock of dark hair. Two glaring eyes rolled fiercely round. I closed my eyes a moment in terror, and remained rigid. Then I opened them slightly, and saw that, with his head and shoulders in the room, the man was leaning over the window-sill, and placing something—perhaps his lantern or tools—on the floor.

Now was my opportunity—my only one. The back of his neck gleamed bare before me. I set my teeth. Swift and silent as a panther about to spring, I rose to my knees, raised the knife above me, then—oh, horrible! —dashed it down with all the fierce, mad strength that possessed me, straight at that broad, bare nape.

It sunk in soft flesh a moment, then struck something hard. Oh, missed! A living human bone, I thought, as the blade swerved aside and sunk deeper. Then deadly terror, and a burning desire to undo my murderous act filled my soul. I tried to drag the knife from its bed of living flesh.

It snapped off, and with the handle still in my grasp, I fell back on the bed.

When next I opened my eyes, the bright sunlight was streaming in at the window, and the joyous twittering of birds fell upon my ear. I smiled at the sound, then shuddered as the memory of something flashed across me. What a dreadful dream, I thought, then sat up and rubbed my eyes.

Alas! no dream. Red drops of blood, now dry, dyed my hands and the sleeves of my nightgown. The handle of the broken knife lay on the counterpane, where it must have dropped from my hand as I fell back and lost consciousness.

Imagine the horrible amazement of my friends on hearing of my midnight encounter when they came to my room, for I was too weak to leave the bed that day. The grass without showed the footprints of two men. A trail of blood crimsoned the green for several yards, then ceased.

Mr. Adams placed the matter in the hands of the police, but no trace of the men has ever been found. I try to forget the deed; but at times in the night the thought haunts me—was it fatal? G. P. Willson.

RESULT OF THE - - - - - -

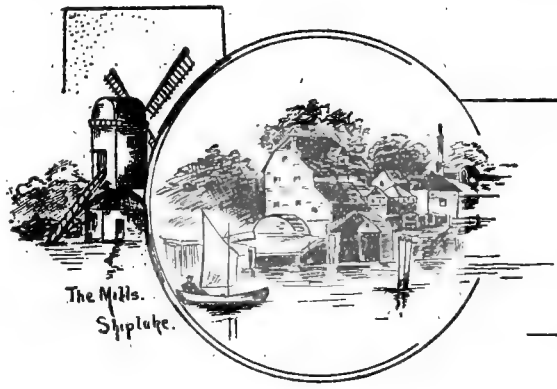
Picture Puzzle Competition.

THE PICTURE PUZZLE COMPETITION, particulars of which were published in the issue of *SHORT STORIES* dated January 25, has been an eminently successful one. Many thousands of persons entered for it, but, unfortunately, we underrated our readers' ingenuity in this matter, and did not make the task sufficiently difficult, for, of those attempts received on the first day, no fewer than 160 were correct. In order that there may be no disappointment among the correct competitors, we have decided to divide the £10 among them, with the result that each person whose name appears in the subjoined list receives 1s. 3d. The addresses may be seen at this office by anyone who may so desire.

Mrs. Wickers, Charles Harwood, Walter R. Eiden, A. Page, jun., Arthur Grigg, E. Britton, Harry Smith, J. P. Fitzgerald, Mrs. H. C. Batchelor, J. E. Smith, E. A. G. Howard, F. J. Gill, John Ness, William E. Hurst, Charles E. Wacogne, Miss Mary Belliss, R. H. Sentance, William Hurt, Herbert H. Jennings, Frederick Travers, Albert Vigor, Sydney Warr, Frederick Provis, F. E. Rennison. F. W. Comrie, Thomas Logan, J. Selby, A. E. Taylor, Don MacGillivray, W. Nicholson, W. H. Braw, Mrs. Day, W. Hull, C. Young, E. Bierman, W. E. Tanner, C. Phillips, J. W. Lavender, F. Napoli, Miss M. Benson, W. Martin, C. Bearman, Louisa Bastin, Mrs. S. A. Howe, W. Hood, P. H. Orme, G. Baker, A. H. Huss, W. Martinnant, H. Williams, F. Jarvis, J. Lamberton, P. A. Watts, W. S. Parry, J. A. Thornton, N. De Courcy, T. Seddon, C. H. Godden, T. H. Smith, J. McGowan, E. R. Cartwright, T. Albion, J. W. Rayner, E. Holmes. P. C. A. Cotton, F. T. Vine, W. Andrews, H. Lacey, J. A. Bates, S. Roe, Frank Harcourt, H. F. Wootton, Mrs. C. Ward, Martha Johnson, F. Cookson, James O'Brien, Oscar J. Carlisle, W. J. Brown, J. A. Raven, Mrs. A. Beresford, W. H. Goodwin, Lilian Cooper, R. J. A. Bennett, E. E. Du Soir, E. Johnstone, W. G. Sanders, G. S. Syndercombe, J. Doman Turner, H. H. Parry, Mary Rex, A. J. Collick, W. Bennett, R. T. Wall, A. E. Roby, T. Draper, Miss K. Webster, A. Raynham, C. J. Wright, A. Ramell, W. T. Tigg, L. Wiles, G. Shore, W. Walter, Mrs. A. J. Clark, A. C. Crumpler, K. Nelson, F. C. Long, A. B. Du Soir, W. H. Clark, H. Wilson, G. A. Parker, O. E. G. Allsup, G. S. Riche s, jun., H. Picton, Mrs. Wilkinson, T. P. Hiorus, B. S. Barber, F. G. Callcott, E. A. Page, Mrs. Woollett, Leo Hicks, L. H. Good, A. Clegg, A. W. Boothby, W. F. M. Hunter, Mrs. Cartwright, Miss M. J. Bailden, Mrs. A. Edkins, F. H. Hemming, S. Frames, H. Willmott, R. P. Wall, B. Herring, G. J. Lodge, T. Dittmar, E. Stones, A. W. Rowe, C. J. H. Dunning, K. Black, A. Skeats, G. Waller, C. E. Oliver, A. Raymond, E. C. Webb, C. E. Ayland, R. Bathurst, J. Brawmuller, W. Wilmore, Mrs. Wesley, C. Morris, jun., H. J. Gable, Ethel F. Jach, J. H. Hack, S. N. Crowle, R.N., Mrs. A. F. Moncrieff, H. A. Molt, Miss Arch, T. H. Helsdon, E. Smith, A. Lowe, and L. Jezzi.

Next week we shall have something to say about Consolation Prizes.

Google



The GIRL with the CAT EYES.

One day when the stage arrived at Big Flats a very handsome, well-dressed, athletic-looking young man alighted and took the trail for Shady Canyon. Turning the corner of a huge granite column, out of whose perpendicular-split centre grew a stunted pine, he stopped short and laughed outright at the kittenish antics of a small girl playing alone by the trail.

The girl stopped her play and stood before him with hands down and clasped, looking straight into his face, not boldly nor yet bashfully, but with a sort of wonderment of expression. She was a very small creature, and as to age, might have been anywhere from twelve to sixteen. Her hair, which was a peculiar yellow, was cut close to her head.

The young man started slightly when he met the full gaze of the strange, yellow eyes. "Cat eyes" was his first thought. A repelling fascination crept over him as the impression deepened in his mind that there was an indescribable feline expression all over the child. So swiftly do one's thoughts take shape, before he could bring his lips to form a question, the ridiculous idea had come and gone that should he turn away from the moveless stars of those curious yellow eyes, the small creature would spring upon his shoulders a ferociously wild cat.

"My little girl, can you tell me how far it is to Shady Canyon?"

She bobbed her head over one shoulder, thus indicating both distance and direction.

"See it?"

He flushed slightly at the nearness to the town, or maybe at the implication conveyed in the tone and the gesture.

"Nobody ever said that to me since he died."

"Said what?"

"My little girl."

"What is your name?"

"It's Cat Eyes since he died."

The creepy sensation again came over the young man when the child uttered the first thought which had come to him about her eyes. He conquered the feeling, and asked her very kindly: "How long has it been since he died?"

"It's been a hundred years, I think. Anything in that," nodding to the bag which he carried, "that'd get out?" Assured that there was not, she continued in her quiet, quaint way, "Then I'll carry it up to the house for you, 'cause you called me what he used to."

He let her take it, and followed her up the trail just to see how the adventure would end. To him anything that promised a new sensation would surely be followed. He was only twenty-four, but he had been born rich artistically, intellectually, physiologically, and financially, and had been adventurously prodigal with all these gifts. A few steps below the trail one of some boys who were picking gum from a burnt pine log said to his companions, purposely loud enough for the girl to hear: "By Jehoshephat, it's Cat Eyes a-towing a greenhorn up to Mrs. Squeers."

She put down the bag, and turned upon them in a fury of rage and shame, but they had vanished in a chorus of laughter. The girl could not have told why she was ashamed, but ashamed she was. Cat Eyes belonged to Shady Canyon, but not a child in the village would play with her. They said they were afraid of her cat eyes, and that sparks would fly from her yellow hair. One boy declared that he had only given her hair the least little touch, and that she had turned into an angry yellow cat and scratched his face.

Three years before, on a chilly Sunday afternoon, she had been left crouching on her father's grave. Each kind-hearted woman thought, of course, that some other kind-hearted woman would care for her. And so it happened that Mrs. Squeers, returning from a walk in the woods, took the sobbing child to her saloon and gambling resort. The child's father had squandered many a gold piece in her place, and, when the child clung to her in her desolation, a feeling of protection sprang up in her heart.

Mrs. Squeers was an educated woman with much graciousness of manner. So she was popular with the men. Cat Eyes, therefore, in spite of her environments, received some advantages of speech and polish from the woman.

Cat Eyes led the young man into Mrs. Squeers' place. Vernon Allinson, which was the young man's name, did not stay, as Cat Eyes had hoped, but went to the little hotel, whose creaking signboard seemed always lamenting a better time.

Allinson's stay at Shady Canyon lengthened into months. He took Cat Eyes on long rambles up steep heights where they had to use their hands to help them up. On these long rambles their talks were grave and quiet, and on many subjects. She learnt much from him, and was an eager though unobtrusive listener.

One evening she was called into the saloon to recite. She had a marvellous voice, and it amazed the crowd. Barty Nesman in his enthusiasm attempted to kiss her, when Vernon struck him a blow on the face. There would have been bloodshed had not Mrs. Squeers inter-

Google

fered. Barty vowed that he would have revenge. At the same time Allinson peremptorily told Mrs. Squeers to send Cat Eyes out of the place and never have her in the saloon again. Frightened and stupid with amazement, she was sent to her room and never again recited in the saloon. But from that hour she was a self-abnegated slave to Allinson and was afraid that Barty would take vengeance upon him.

One crisp, cold morning in the late autumn she stood among the fading flowers and yellow leaves in the garden, with an ache of intuition in her heart. She had changed much in a few months—no longer a child, not yet a woman. Presently Allinson called to her, as he had done on other mornings. A dull red, painful to see, darkened her face.

He carried the bag which he had brought to the place. Silently, entirely subdued, she walked beside him down the canyon, and though he tried his best he could not get a word from her.

Just beyond the great boulder where he first met her he said good-bye. He made a pretty speech and gave her advice. She only gazed at him with a helpless, vacant stare, which so irritated him that he dropped her hand and walked away.

"Stupid creature," he said to himself. "I've wasted a summer trying to put a soul into this odd creature." While she in the dead leaves where he had left her standing, dropped to the earth, shaking from head to foot with tearless sobs. She bit the dry leaves and scratched her face with her hands, and there in the afternoon of the day Mrs. Squeers found her.

* * * * *

It was seven years since Vernon Allinson left the little girl, Cat Eyes, standing in the mountain path. He had just returned to San Francisco, and stood shaking hands with an acquaintance, a young man, much younger in years than he had knowledge of years.

"How long have you been in the city?"

"Landed at ten this morning."

"Straight from Paris?"

"In a roundabout way, straight from Paris."

"Then you have not seen the Tigress?"

"Nor heard of it. What is it?"

"It? Ha, ha, ha! It's at Maguire's, and it has set the town crazy in three nights."

"A woman I see," said Vernon indifferently.

"A woman you do not see," said the other, "or you would not speak so indifferently. Oh, Vernon, such a woman! A glittering, dazzling creature, whose acting and face are indescribable and incomparable. You have never seen anything like her, I know."

"Hard hit you are, my boy—very hard hit. You forget that I have dined on the theatre beauty of Paris, London, and Madrid. Do you think I'll be captivated by an amateur in your primitive metropolis at the Golden Gate?"

"You may laugh at me, but you will not laugh after you have seen her."

"Then, by all the saints, take me to her at once."

They were comfortably seated. A storm of applause announced the appearance of the *débutante*. "A glittering, dazzling creature, incomparable and indescribable." He kept repeating the spirit of his friend's words, and from that moment his eyes never left her while she was in sight of them. "Tigress? Tigress? Why the Tigress?" he thought, then felt the appropriateness of the title.

Only a tigress with the freedom of the jungle in its limbs could have such a superb grace of movement and perfection of contour. And such eyes, what were they? They were mirrors of topaz reflecting the gaslight. And her hair, what a glorious crown it was! He thought it richer amber in the shadows, and spun sunshine when the lights fell upon it. And yet it was the impression rather than the appearance that made him repeat again and again: "Tigress, my beautiful Tigress," so quick are we to lay claim to what pleases us.

In the middle of the play he took the diamond pin from his cravat and the *boutonnière* from his coat, and thrust the improvished bouquet at her feet. She saw the gleam of light coming, and the hand which had thrown it, and flashed her wonderful eyes on his face. She picked up the *boutonnière*, pinned it carelessly to her breast, then made an interpolation in the part she was playing, and sang:

Oh, do you remember the well-beaten trail
That led from the camp to the spring?
And the potpies we had from the squir'l and quail,
And the evenings when we used to sing?
The shady old camp is all gone to decay,
The ham-bone has dropped from the pin,
The roof and the door have both rotted away,
And the chimney is all tumbled in.

The glorious voice rose untrammelled. The warm, rich notes filled and thrilled the place. The words of the old song, sung at so many camp-fires, seemed to float and linger over the heads of the people. A large part of the audience were Californians of the old days, and the familiar tune, with its memories, made many a grizzled face wet with tears.

Vernon did not applaud. She had sung at him for him. This was the girl he had thought stupid in the mountain path, shaded with pines, seven years ago. Cat Eyes had grown to the subtle grace and charm of the tigress. He had been blind—so blind. Who had made this change? A fierce jealousy took possession of him. What man had taken up this beautiful creature? Allinson forget that he had dropped her with a few words of cold advice

"Take me to the stage to see her," he said to his companion.

"Take you to the moon!" he replied.

"Why not to the stage?"

"Why not to the moon? One is as accessible as the other to you."

"Where does she live?" asked Allinson.

"What?" asked the friend.

"The Tigress. Who else?"

"Don't know. It is said she does not receive callers, except those on business."

"Well, I'll find out."

And he did. The next morning at an early hour he handed his card to the Chinaman who opened the door, with the request to take it to the lady of the house.

"No, sabe," said the Chinaman. Vernon pointed to the card, then to his hand, then into the house.

"No, sabe."

"Let me brighten your understanding." And he handed him a piece of money. "Heap no, sabe," but there was a sly twinkle in the Chinaman's eye. Just then a young woman came to the door and invited him in. With his pulses on fire he waited to see if she would come. Then there was a sliding of folding doors, the heavy curtains were pushed apart, and the Tigress, in all her royal, graceful loveliness, stepped into the room. Vernon rose eagerly to meet her. She held his card in one hand and extended the other and prosaically said: "Mr. Allinson, I am pleased to meet you."

Digitized by Google

This cold, beautiful woman, whose name he did not know, had evidently no prior knowledge of him.

"Cat Eyes, it is not fair." These were not the words he intended to say. It was what he called her in Shady Canyon. He said it now with so much of the plaintive and petulant in his tone that Cat Eyes laughed. And such a laugh! Clear as the ring of a silver bell. A musical ripple of merriment. Then she shook hands with him again. The ice was suddenly melted.

They sat down facing each other, their knees nearly touching, so close were they. They lived over that summer in Shady Canyon.

"And do you remember," he said, "that I made you a wreath of manzanita berries and crowned you queen, you, my little Cat Eyes—Miss——. What is your name? Strange that I should have known you so long and not know your real name."

"An evidence that you have been very, very much interested in me."

"Remember I stayed three months longer in Shady Canyon because you were there."

"I remember."

"Then pity my embarrassment. You have outgrown Cat Eyes. Your friends call you——"

"The Tigress."

"Tigress be it then. My Tigress, my precious, royal, dangerous, jungle Tigress. My arms shall be your cage." He leant forward to clasp her in his arms. There was something in the laughter of her shining topaz eyes that stopped him.

"There are forty-nine other cages with the same placard on them all, ahead of yours."

"But I love you," he said.

"Same announcement that the other forty-nine make," as she glanced at him.

"But you loved me a little bit, did you not?"

"Maybe, but that was seven years ago. They say one changes utterly in seven years. And if Cat Eyes loved you, the love has evaporated, and been shorn from her head, and clipped from her nails, and rubbed off on towels. It is the Tigress now."

"You are cruel. You know I loved you so, seven years ago."

"You must have loved me. How you must have loved me then."

The yellow topaz eyes were laughing, the mouth was still smiling, but the words were cutting and ended in a moan like that of a wounded wild beast. All the days of her joyous childhood were crowded into it. The nails of her hand, which rested on the arm of the sofa, dug into the velvet till her wrist was raised from the cushions and the knuckles of her fingers looked white because of the tenseness of her skin.

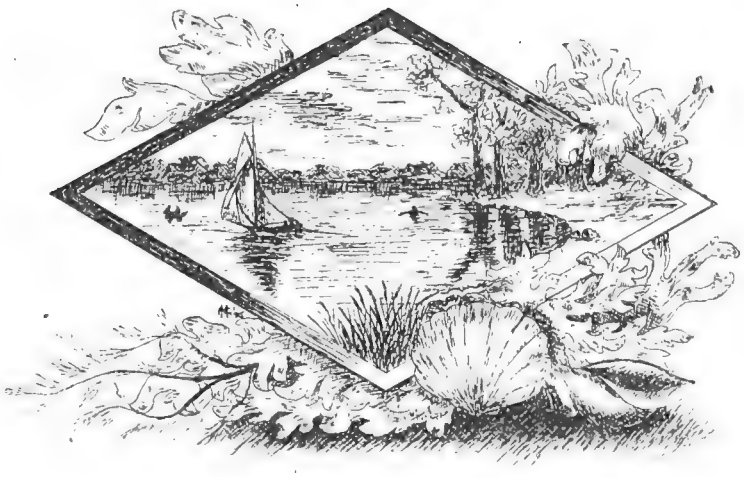
He got up and sat down beside her, and took her hands. "I love you passionately now. My love is an avalanche broken from every restraint. I love you, Miss Tigress."

"Perhaps Mrs. Tigress. I wonder you are not afraid to hold a tigress's paws; you might get scratched."

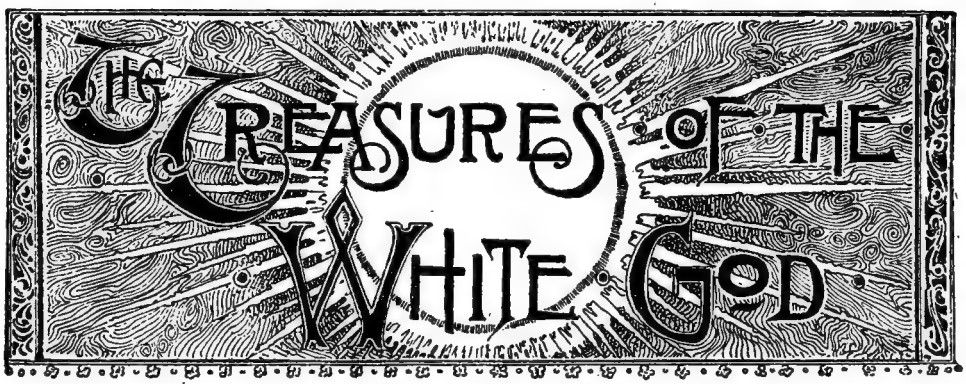
"You've scratched my heart into shreds already. What a fool!—oh, what a fool I was not to know seven years ago that you loved me!" he said.

"And what a fool not to know it now!" There was bitterness—nay, almost contempt—in her voice, but the words were all-satisfying. He caught her to his breast and kissed her, and kissed her eyelids and forehead, cold hands and pale cheeks, amber hair and her wrists, and her sleeves, and tremulous mouth. Her head sank on his shoulder, her beautiful arms clasped round him, and a torrent of tears burst from her eyes, the first she had ever shed.

RICHARD SIBERT.



Digitized by Google



The Story of a Shameful Crime.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Cancelled!

Mr. Detective Dean cashed the cheque that Richard Sheldon gave him the day succeeding that upon which he had apparently witnessed the death of Adrian Burgoyne or Robert Lane, convict 407.

So far excitement, the pursuit of a cherished object, had sustained him. For years, drawing a fair salary, he had dreamed of the day when a single "turn of luck," a substantial reward, would place him beyond want, and afford him the means of gratifying the one dominant ambition of his life—to become a landed proprietor.

Once the precious price of silence, honour, a wronged fellow-creature's innocence, reposed safely in his pocket, however, Mr. Detective Dean began to experience a sensation foreign to his nature for years.

He realised that the £2,000 was a bribe, hush-money practical black-mail. He comprehended that he was joining hands with a thorough scoundrel. He did not know all the details of the scheme of Richard Sheldon, but he could, without much difficulty, fit the disjointed pieces of the disordered enigma together, and form a pretty plausible theory that Sheldon was a scheming villain, and dead convict 407 his persecuted victim.

"He's dead—drowned, burned to a cinder," mused Dean. "All the vindication in the world would not help him now. I'm paid for my trouble. I've earned my reward—I'm going to enjoy it!"

But that was more easily said than done. In the rush and bustle of his active profession, hardened by daily contact with sordid, soulless criminals, Mr. Detective Dean had believed that emotion, sentiment, even conscience, were dead. Once out of the whirl, however, his mind began to prey upon itself. He was amazed to find his thoughts going back to the days when he sat at a loving mother's knee, and listened to the early precepts of wisdom and religion.

He began to see the face of the hunted convict in his dreams; he grew nervous, uneasy.

"You have failed in your duty—you have sold your soul for gold!" whispered regret.

"The man is dead. I could not prove his innocence, if I would," the worried heart cheated him into believing temporarily.

Somehow he did not feel right. What did his boasted record amount to? Shadowing a few law-breakers, dragging a dozen or two unfortunates to gaol! He could not recall a case where he had done a real bright, joy-giving deed. It was all gloomy justice, resentment, stern unwavering punishment. The record was all on the side of terror, gloom and darkness.

He began to evade his former associates. They regarded his sudden resignation from the force, his reported accession to a fortune left him by a favourite relative, suspiciously. He evaded them more than ever as he one day met Inspector Grey.

The latter was flushed, proud, buoyant, over the successful termination of a case, the first steps in which had been directed by Dean himself.

Persistent effort had resulted in the unmasking of a villain; the restoration to her family of a lovely girl; happiness, joy, justice—justice evolved from darkness, plotting and fraud. The papers rang with praises of Grey; the family he had reunited, idolised him. He had done a good deed, and, as a material benefit, a reward of £2,000 had been forced upon him.

With a bitter sigh at "the rare luck of other men," ex-Detective Dean left his jubilant friend, feeling the coward and craven more than ever.

"Bosh!" he ejaculated angrily, after a wretched, remorseful day. "Money is money—come easy, come hard, come rightfully, come wrongfully. I am not going to mope. The money was justly earned. I am not going to bother myself about a dead man's wrongs. It's the inactivity after active service that is preying upon my mind. Once I get at home among my pets, my beauties, the flowers, I'll feel all right; these dismal vagaries will cease to haunt me."

"All the same, you helped to drive convict 407 to his death!" rang out the disquieting voice of remorse.

Mr. Detective Dean purchased the rose garden in question—a pretty ten-acre plot, with a picturesque house, situated near Lynde, and within easy distance of the city.

A thrill of pride buoyed up his hopes and plans for the future, as he recorded the deed. Then he fell to wondering if that name, Berwyn Dean, would hold a place on the witness-book of eternity, when convict 407 summoned him before the last court of final inquiry, on the Day of Judgment; and he spent the rest of the day in wretched, sullen moping.

The garden was a beauty, its roses enough to set wild a less intense enthusiast. Ah! the fresh, crisp touch of the clear country air! the soft, intoxicating perfume of the velvet glories of pink and white!

Digitized by Google

Yet, somehow, those zephyrs seemed to blow across a charnel-house of guilt within him, and he felt as if his breath would blight the pretty flowers. The man was becoming morbid, depressed, haunted.

He fought the grim phantoms his sensitive mind evoked with every subterfuge and system of fallacious reasoning he could conjure; but vainly. He had an inherent love of Nature, but that pure devotion to flowers could not exist, untainted, in company with the one crushing, ever-present reproach that he had sold his honour for gold, that he had hounded a possibly innocent man to his death.

So, leading an existence of indifferent comfort, ever restless, ever haunted, he tried to forget the canker of regret by looking into the golden, glowing hearts of the beautiful flowers about him.

One day—it was a week after the sending of the telegram to Richard Sheldon that announced the success of Colonel Lytle's mission in Mexico—the gardener came to where Dean was putting some plants in a remote corner of the garden to announce a visitor from the city.

"Who is it?" Dean questioned, irritated at an interruption, morbidly shrinking from meeting any one whose presence would revive memories of the past.

"Says his name is Grey."

"Oh, the inspector! I'll come—no, he doesn't need a formal welcome. Bring him here; I can't leave these slips, now I've started in on them."

He hurried his work, and completed the task just as a grim, erect figure shadowed the flower bed.

"Well, old partner!" spoke Grey cheerfully. "I find you at work?"

Dean tried to greet his old-time friend effusively. It was a failure; and the shrewd, suspicious eyes of the old police officer noted it to be so.

"Yes, inspector, but glad to see you. It's getting lonely here."

"See here, Dean!" smiled Grey, an unusual twinkle of self-satisfaction in his eye. "Inspector is a thing of the past."

"Eh?" ejaculated Dean with a start. "You don't mean to say that you've resigned?"

"Not much."

"But——"

"Salary doubled—month's holiday; so I thought I'd run down and see an old crony."

"Then you're promoted?"

"My last case brought me advancement, yes. They've made me Superintendent."

Dean's face fell. Superintendent! What he had lost! Ah! the man before him could crush and hound and punish, but only when duty dictated. *He* had not sold his soul for a bribe!

Dean listened dismally, shrinking within his unworthy self, as Grey chatted on animatedly. He felt like a lost angel, shut out of paradise.

"Enough of me!" cried Grey finally. "I came to see you. And those wonderful roses? Come, rouse up, Dean! You appear half dead. Rural felicity ain't doing much for you, it seems to me. Show me the grounds."

Dean tried to be more cordial and energetic. He took the chief through the garden. He showed him roses enough to garland a palace.

He rattled over the bewildering varieties. Here were the glowing Jacqueminots, there the stately Cloth of Gold—pink, white, amber, crimson, single, double; tiny as a posey, mammoth as a sunflower! A veritable garden of beauty! The old police officer enjoyed the tramp mightily, and then, as they reached the end of the garden, and came to a broken high fence, he began carefully reading the inscriptions that were written on the little wooden tags attached to each bush, indicating its age, variety, and pedigree.

"Moss-rose, crossed with yellow common," droned Grey.

"Quite a complicated business! What's that? Some new plant, not yet sprouted?"

The spot where the two men had halted was the identical copse that had harboured Adrian Burgoyne a few weeks previous.

As the old inspector spoke he curiously indicated a little mound of earth, with a tag, somewhat larger than those used on the rose-bushes, sticking up at its head.

"Eh?" muttered Dean, staring. "That? No, I've planted nothing there that I know of."

"There's a wooden tag."

"Yes, and—why! it's got writing on it. Maybe the gardener—Mercy!"

Dean had carelessly picked up the piece of wood.

The mock tombstone, the fanciful epitaph that Adrian Burgoyne had written nearly two months ago, at that self-same spot, looked up at the detective with sentient power of overwhelming speech and accusation.

Wild-eyed, he perused it; with trembling hands, he thrust it into his bosom. His companion stared at him as if he was mad, for, with a vehemence that was almost frantic, Dean dragged him from the spot, as if it was haunted.

He tried to be jovial, cordial. He invited his friend to remain a week, a month, as his guest. In the light of that bloodless face, those hollow eyes, the chief of police politely dissented. He had to be on the move; he must catch the next train. Sorry, but he would come again; and he left the place with a serious, wondering face, trying to analyse the strange incoherent actions of Mr. Detective Dean.

Once alone, with feverish wildness Dean tore the wooden tombstone from his bosom, where he had hidden it, as if it was a burning brand.

Once again, with distended eyes and ashen face, he perused the mystifying chronicle.

It bore a date—a date four days later than the day upon which convict 407 had seemingly met his death—and it read.

"*Sacred to the memory of Convict 407—Adrian Burgoyne. Died——*" and the date followed. "*Murdered by the law. Resurgam!*"

What did it mean? Written after Burgoyne's death! What did it mean? The handwriting was his, indubitably!

"Murdered by the law!" Over and over, and over again, the haunting words ran riot through the fevered brain of the half-mad detective.

"Murdered by the law!" As dusk came on he seemed to see those words written in scroll, like characters of fire, in the air, on the walls, among the bushes.

Was he going mad? No. The chronicle was plain, terse. His trained mind traced cause and effect. He could yet reason.

At midnight a lone, forlorn figure stole from the garden and made for the railway station at Lynde.

At earliest dawn Mr. Detective Dean knocked at the door of the house in the city where lived the man from whom he had purchased the rose villa.

The latter regarded his white, anguished face, wonderingly.

"You look troubled, Mr. Dean," he began sympathetically, when the other waved him to silence with an imperious gesture of his hand.

"No nonsense!" he grated hoarsely. "You told me the day I bought the villa that I had just anticipated another customer?"

"Yes."

"It was true?"

"I am not given to lying!" bluntly and indignantly came the response.

"He offered more money?"

"Yes."

"He wants it now?"

"Badly. He would raise his offer, I think."

"Take it! Give me your cheque for what I paid you, now, at once—the bare amount I paid you—and make what you can of it."

"Why! Mr. Dean——"

"Take it or leave it—no trifling!" cried Dean, almost fiercely. "I need the money—at once!"

Digitized by Google

"I will accept. Make out your deed!"

10 o'clock—Detective Dean ran up the steps of the bank, a fluttering cheque in his hand.

10.5—He came down, bearing a parcel wrapped up in a newspaper.

10.15—The cab he had engaged halted in front of the palatial home of Richard Sheldon.

He ran up the marble steps. He fairly brushed by the servant who answered his ring at the door and stated that his master was in the library.

Into that apartment the detective dashed.

Richard Sheldon looked up with a start at a sight of the white face, the disordered attire, the bloodshot eyes of his unexpected visitor.

"Dean," he cried wonderingly. "In the name of goodness—"

"Stop!" rang out from the detective's lips, in a hoarse, echoing gasp. "No words! You bid for my soul, and I sold; but I cancel the bargain! Blood-money, a curse, a bribe from perdition, I give it back. I spurn it. I refuse it. There, *there*, THERE is your £2,000!"

He flung the package he bore before the appalled Sheldon as he spoke.

Then overstrained nature gave way. He uttered a strange, grating cry, he tore spasmodically at his shirt collar, he reeled suddenly.

10.25—Mr Detective Dean threw up his arms and fell to the floor, prone, senseless.

The merchant arose, trembling in every limb. He stared at the packet of bank-notes; he glared down at the motionless form of his visitor.

His thrilling words haunting his soul, Richard Sheldon made a movement to ring for a servant; then his hand fell nerveless to his side.

What was that? He started and listened! A ring at the front door—sharp, exacting, sudden; a loud, familiar voice—jubilant, bold, aggressive; hurried footsteps, the bumping, dragging thud of some heavy object.

10.30—The little clock on the mantel pealed out two silvery strokes. The door of the library was thrust open, and a man strode in, all excitement, all bustling animation, all triumph—

Colonel Lytle!

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Penance of Berwyn Dean.

Like an old campaigner fresh from the wars, flushed with victory, and bursting joyously in upon an old comrade, Colonel Lytle had unceremoniously entered the library.

With perturbed manner and white, annoyed face, Richard Sheldon greeted him. He had been expecting him. Various telegrams had kept him posted concerning the northward progress of man and treasure, but he had counted on no such interruption and annoyance as the startling and dramatic appearance of Detective Dean had evolved.

Before he could fully analyse the motives of Dean in returning the money, before he could fairly comprehend that the money itself had been returned, the Colonel was overwhelming him with questions.

"Hello!" ejaculated the latter, "what does this mean?" and he stared in wonder alternately from merchant to detective.

"I hardly know; it was so sudden, so dramatic," replied Sheldon, in a choked voice.

"He—he hasn't betrayed us?"

"Hardly. He's in the trap as closely as ourselves."

"Then——"

"He broke in here like a madman—threw that package of bank-notes on the table, called it hush-money, and—" Sheldon gave a graphic description of the startling scene.

"Hum!" muttered Lytle sardonically, "I see. Guilty conscience, remorse; too fine strung for a detective; too sensitive for a tool or confidant. Well, if he doesn't want the money, take it!"

"But it was the price of his silence!"

"He won't talk; he can't afford to. He presents the anomaly of an honest man who would like to be a rascal, and dares not. He'll feel better now, pose as a martyr, do his penance in silence, and trouble us no further."

"But what shall I do with him?"

Lytle inspected the prostrate officer.

"Lift him to a couch, and let him stay there until he recovers. No use making a gossip for the servants; it's only a fainting fit."

"Besides, he may have something to say of importance."

"Exactly," chimed in Lytle, "only"—and his sinister eyes sparkled jubilantly—"all he might say or do, or, for that matter, any one else, need trouble you and me no longer."

"Ah! then, you mean—" began Sheldon suspensefully, and with eager excitement.

"We are made for life!"

"The Ringold treasure——"

"Is ours! Do you understand, old chum, crony, partner? We're rich! we're nabobs, Crœsuses, kings!" And Colonel Lytle slapped his friend and familiar sharply on the shoulder, and chuckled gloatingly.

"You've got the——"

"White God! yes, at a cost! Five thousand in cold, hard cash, half-a-dozen lives, and a legacy of fanatic vengeance!" and Lytle laughed contemptuously—"but I've got it!"

"Where is it?"

Sheldon's voice shook with poorly suppressed emotion and anxiety.

"Pretty glad to see it, eh?" demanded Lytle tantalisingly.

"Don't torture me—don't play with me!" cried Sheldon sharply. "I'm on the pins and needles of suspense. I tell you, Lytle, I'm standing on the verge of an abyss, into which I feared some untimely accident would topple me any day of your absence."

"As bad as that?" muttered Lytle seriously.

"Yes. The ready cash I had to supply you, the two thousand for the detective, the losses on the Board of Trade, bad investments generally, had all contributed to bring me practically to the verge of ruin. How I have tided over, I don't know. I have been operating on borrowed money for over a month; every penny of my own is locked up in the Golcondas: I can't draw it out. The mine isn't paying, and I expect a crash in that quarter any day."

"But why now talk of failure—a crash?" interrupted Lytle buoyantly. "We have the White God — Ralph Ringold's treasure-chest, his hidden fortune. One million—two—a royal dowry, at the least! Come! Help me in with it."

The prone form on the couch moved restively, but the plotters noted it not. The one all gloating, supercilious triumph, the other verily quivering with emotion, they advanced to the door, and Lytle threw it open.

"There it is!" he announced.

An iron box lay just near the threshold of the vestibule doors, whither the cabman who had brought it and Lytle from the train had helped the latter drag it.

"Take hold!" ordered Lytle.

"Where shall we take it?"

"Into the library, of course. Why, man! you're fairly stupefied. Don't you want to have a look at your treasure?"

After considerable exertion the two men managed to get the heavy box across the threshold of the merchant's study.

Lytle did not delay in exposing its contents. He drew a key from his pocket, fitted it to the lock of the iron box, and threw back the lid.

"Look!" he ordered.

Digitized by Google

An awed expression crossed Sheldon's face as he peered. The white, blank face of the idol stared up at him. In its squat hideousness, it was repulsive; it seemed to squint and shrink from the light of day.

"Did—did you open it—examine it?" queried he confusedly.

"Not I! Too quick work in getting over the border safely to think of that. No, no; original package! Ha ha! I only appropriated one thing—this. It was blazing in the forehead of that impossible monster, and I fancied it, and had it set for my more classic bosom. See?"

The Colonel indicated a peculiar yellow brilliant that gleamed from his immaculate shirt front, and irradiated it with a pale, straw-colour glamour, and then he pointed to the cavity in the head of the idol, where it had reposed for centuries.

"You are sure this is *the* idol—our idol?" queried Sheldon.

"Sure? Yes, it's ours—very much ours! There is but one White God. It's the end of our scheming, Sheldon—possession! Think what it has cost—others! We sent that devoted martyr, Burgoyne, to gaol on a trumped-up charge; we have kept the girl, Patrice, in seclusion for five years; we have plotted, sinned, waited. Well, the last act is on. Get a chisel, and ring down the curtain. Then for the final transformation scene in Aladdin, or the Wonderful Scamp!"

In a truly jovial mood was Colonel Lytle this fine, autumnal day! And a really lamb-like and innocent trust in the perfect justice and honour of his friend he seemed to repose! That did not not trouble him, however—treachery. Had he not documents at home, in his private desk, carefully saved, devoutly treasured, the production of which would unmask all his ally's villainies, if he ever "kicked over the traces?"

"Get a chisel," he repeated. "Here, lift this magnificent specimen of carved abomination to the table."

They raised the dumb deity from the iron box. Then Sheldon sped from the apartment. He returned quickly with the tool designated.

"See!" spoke Lytle, pointing to a seamed section at the back of the figure—"there is where Ringold cut out the piece, stored his treasure, and cemented it up again with a paste made of the rock dust."

"I see," murmured Sheldon. "It cuts as if it was pretty fresh, doesn't it, Lytle?"

"That's all right. Ah! you have it!"

The loose section came free. It toppled to the floor.

"Drag the treasure out!" spoke Lytle excitedly. "Ah!"

"*Empty!*"

Empty—past grand and present grand graduates of the glorious school of fraud, rottenness and corruption!—empty, after all of hope, and avarice, and crime, and guilt, to be pricked by justice—mighty fabrics of wrong, erected carefully, only to crash to ruins at the touch of unrelenting fate!

Empty!—hearts and hands alike. They groped, they shook the idol, they inspected it again and again—empty!

They stared at one another blankly, like two crushed beings shipwrecked at the high tide of fortune. Three white faces glared one at the other, and the face of the idol was the whitest, and seemed to mock and sneer at their dismay.

"Murdered by the law!"

Out upon the hushed air of the room rang the sudden words, solemnly, ominously.

"*Resurgam!*"

The plotters fell back. The detective, rising from the couch, advanced towards them like a spectre.

His eyes swept their craven faces, and the face of the squat idol. Once again he repeated the strange words; then, turning, he dashed like a hunted fugitive from the house.

"Murdered by the law"—one convict, 407? No! no! his honour, the golden years of his early manhood, the golden years of his young life; not the man himself!

That, by a miracle, through Providence, had not come about—the detective knew it; the detective felt sure of it.

"*Resurgam*"—"I shall rise again!" He *had* risen! Convict 407 had written his own epitaph!

Therefore, he was alive. Detective Dean had overheard all that had passed between the two plotters in Sheldon's library. Therefore, convict 407 was innocent.

At noon that day a humble-browed, subdued-looking man sought an audience with the inspector of police.

He asked to be reinstated on the detective force; he asked a special and secret commission to open up and reinvestigate the case of "dead convict 407."

At dusk that afternoon, Berwyn Dean started out upon a quest that was a penance—a pilgrimage of contrition, remorse and self-abnegation, that should end only at the shrine of innocence vindicated.

(*To be continued.*)

'TWIXT YOU AND ME.

Pearson's Magazine. 6d. nett.

In these hard times of toil and tribulation we are endeavouring to do our best to alleviate your troubles. We seriously think of giving you

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS!

Of course if you *don't* want it there's an end of the matter, but if you *do*, it will be worth your while to look inside the current number of

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

"The best illustrated monthly in the world."

1d. Home Notes. 1d.

Do you know what a delightful, ideal little ladies' paper is like? Well, *Home Notes* will immediately make clear to you that such a thing does exist.

ANOTHER £10 NOTE

will be offered as a prize for the solution of a Picture Puzzle in *Short Stories* next week. Full particulars as to conditions will appear in that issue.

POSTAL RATES.

Short Stories will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 8d.

Printed and Published by C. Arthur Pearson, at "Pearson's Weekly" Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS

IN THE

TREATMENT OF OBESITY.

"Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength and muscle by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight one or two pounds daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an absolute success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, absolutely guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient in some cases may go for weeks without being able to test whether the Physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring judge. The treatment aims at the actual root of the disease, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For this information, we may say that on sending six penny stamps a book 'Corpulency, and the Cure,' 256 pages, containing a reprint of press notices from some hundreds of Medical and other journals (British and Foreign), and other interesting particulars, including the 'recipe,' can be had from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C."—Extract from *The Belfast News Letter.*

CORPULENCE.

INCREASING POPULARITY OF AN EFFECTUAL CURE.

Many of our readers are, doubtless, familiar with the nature of the extraordinary revolution in the cure of obesity which, within recent years, has been wrought by the original researches of that now eminent expert, Mr. F. Cecil Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. It is evident that the certainty, the rapidity, and the agreeable surroundings of his curative process have been recognised, in a very large degree, among ladies and gentlemen belonging to the highest social circles. Keen observers who have an opportunity of judging inform us, through the pages of society papers and otherwise, that owing to the general employment of Mr. Russell's treatment extreme obesity is becoming as much a thing of the past, at fashionable gatherings, as intoxication; and, no doubt, it will soon be regarded as nearly as disgraceful. The issue of an eighteenth edition of the author's singularly convincing little text-book, "Corpulency, and the Cure," however, serves to remind us that the popularity of the system has now reached spheres far remote from those of West-end fashion. The book of 256 pages may be had (post free) by sending six penny stamps to Mr. Russell's offices, as above; and it is worth the careful attention of those who wish to free themselves of a burden of fat—not merely because it is unseemly and adds enormously to the apparent age of the sufferer—but because extreme obesity terribly interferes with the energy necessary in these days of competition to make one's way in the world, or even to earn a very modest competency. A large proportion of the letters of Mr. Russell's grateful correspondents refer to their delight at being enabled—within a very brief period, and without any irksome conditions implying semi-starvation—to attack their accustomed tasks with pleasure instead of wearied disgust, through being reduced to their normal weight. The popularity of the system is also largely due, doubtless, to the English hatred of mystery, which is utterly swept aside by Mr. Russell. He fully explains his modus operandi, and supplies the receipt for his preparation.

GIVEN AWAY £5,000!

GRAHAM & CO.'S

MONSTER GIFTS.

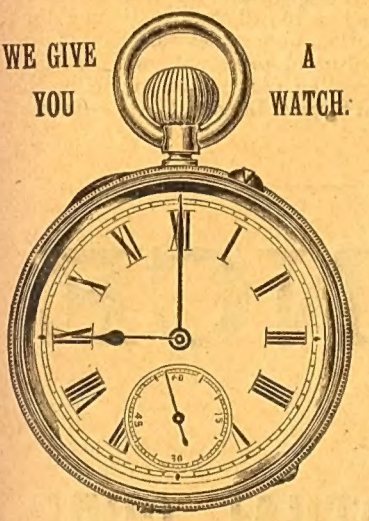
IMPORTANT NOTICE.—Messrs. GRAHAM & CO. intend to present their Customers with a Monster Parcel as a means of advertising their celebrated

EGYPTIAN GOLD JEWELLERY.

For the small sum of **6s. 6d.** we will send as follows:—

NOT A TOY

WE GIVE YOU A WATCH.



	Our Price.	
One Gent's Egyptian Gold Albert, or one Lady's Egyptian Gold Albert	2s. 6d.	FOR
One Seal or Locket for Chain	1s. 6d.	
One Gent's Carbon Diamond Ring, or one Lady's 5-stone Diamond Ring	3s. 6d.	
One Gent's Carbon Diamond Scarfpin, or one Lady's Fashionable Brooch	2s. 6d.	**6s. 6d.**
One Pair of Cuff Links, or one Carbon Diamond Bracelet ...	2s. 6d.	
Total	12s. 6d.	

In addition to the above Every Purchaser will be Presented Free of Charge with one of our handsome

KEYLESS WATCHES.

USUALLY SOLD AT HALF-A-GUINEA.

Read what is said by those who have purchased.

WANTS A SECOND PARCEL.

Lowick-by-Neale, Northumberland, August 17.

GENTLEMEN,—Received to-day your second parcel of jewellery, with which we are immensely pleased. We really wonder how you can do it. The watch itself is worth more than the money charged for the whole. Many thanks for punctuality.—Very truly yours, WILLIAM McISAAC.

GOES BETTER THAN HIS £15 WATCH.

11, North Street, St. Peters, Tunbridge Wells.

GENTLEMEN,—Some few weeks ago I sent to your firm for the jewellery and advertised watch, of which I am surprised; the *watch* is a beautiful timist. I must admit, in fact, it goes better than my £15 gold watch; and for the jewellery it is astonishing value. I think you must lose money over such gifts, as I term it. The watch alone is worth double the 7s. I enclosed. I have shown it to several of my friends, and they were astonished. You can add this to your testimonials if it will be of any service.—I am, Gentlemen, yours faithfully, LEWIS C. RHODES.

GUARANTEED TO KEEP CORRECT TIME.

Any Watch not received in going order will be exchanged.

Every Watch is Carefully Examined, Timed, and Guaranteed a Correct Timekeeper. Call and see them.

We do this to save the enormous cost of advertising, preferring to give our customers the benefit. As we lose money on each parcel we cannot supply more than two parcels to one person. If you cannot call get a P.O. at once, and send for this wonderful parcel. Orders will be executed in Rotation. **MONEY RETURNED IF NOT AS REPRESENTED.**

NOTE.—The entire parcel will be sent for 6s. 6d. (post free, registered, 7s.). Each customer will receive gratis one of our HANDSOMELY ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUES. Be sure and call or send to-day for the

6s. 6d. Monster Presentation Parcel including the Handsome Keyless Watch.

S. S. GRAHAM & CO., 277, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

HAIR DESTROYED permanently and absolutely by an entirely new and harmless self-treatment, total destruction guaranteed. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. Prof. F.T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

BLUSHING

Permanently cured. A Pamphlet giving sound practical advice and particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home-cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof. B. L. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

Readily **Reduce Weight** and **Cure Corpulency Permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are very agreeable, harmless, and never fail to **PRESERVE** both **HEALTH** and **FIGURE** without change of diet. **Reduction begins immediately.**

An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*" Send **2/6** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

THIN BUSTS

Quickly transformed and a good figure permanently obtained by a perfectly harmless, simple, and inexpensive self-treatment. Success guaranteed. For particulars, free, send stamped envelope in confidence to "Madame B. J.," Oriental Toilet Co., 87, Strand, London.

RED NOSES

Permanently cured in a few days by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. A. M. CURTIS, York Chambers, Adelphi, London, W.C.